XV. Marketing

Chapter XV: Marketing

Note: Several types of information are needed to develop a business plan. To keep the volume of information in a manageable form, the material has been divided into Chapter XII-Decision Making and Business Planning; Chapter XIII- Regulations and Legal Concerns; Chapter XIV-Liability Insurance; Chapter XV-Marketing; and Chapter XVI-Funding and Assistance Programs. It is necessary to review all of the chapters when developing a comprehensive business and marketing plan.

Check with your local county cooperative extension agent or Resource Conservation and Development Council Coordinator to see what is available in your state and to identify local or state leads.

A. General

A. GENERAL

A. General

Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers
SARE, USDA, CSREES.
This publication provides information about alternative value-added marketing strategies, case studies, and a list of resources that include websites, books and periodicals. The publication offers insight into marketing through farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, and new cooperatives. It also has several success stories.
Available online at: http://www.sare.org/market99/index.htm
Hardcopies available by calling, (202) 720-5203

Reap New Profit: Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers
Sustainable Agricultural Network, SARE
Power Point Presentation for educators. Overview in Resource Manual
To view a preview go to: http://www.sare.org/htdocs/events/pr/oct252000.htm
To order:
Ph: or (301) 504-6422
Email: san@nal.usda.gov

Profitable Pork: Strategies for Hog Producers
This publication contains information about low cost and pasture based hog production and marketing niches and options.
Available at www.sare.org/bulletin/hogs or
Hardcopies available by calling 202-720-5203

Profitable Poultry: Raising Birds on Pasture
This publication contains information about low cost free range poultry and egg production and marketing niches and options.
Available at www.sare.org/bulletin/poultry or
Hardcopies available by calling 202-720-5203.

Direct Marketing and Related Topics, January 91-December 96, QB 97-02
Compiled by Mary Gold
Quick bibliography of 235 citations from AGRICOLA.
Compiled by Mary Gold, October 1999
Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, NAL
This publication provides information on and resources on CSA.
Available online at: www.nal.usda.gov/afsic
Ph: (301) 504-6559
Email: mgold@nal.usda.gov

Organic Agricultural Products: Marketing and Trade Resources
This is a CD of resource information.

Available online at: www.nal.usda.gov/afsic or to order
Ph: (301) 504-6559
Email: mgold@nal.usda.gov

Farmer Direct Marketing Program
USDA/AMS
A list of publications and information available at the Agricultural Marketing Service web site. This program facilitates cooperation and collaboration among agencies and organizations that promote direct marketing and help small farmers benefit from the growing consumer interest in direct marketing. Their website provides information, news, and publications that deal with direct marketing. For more information go to
Website: http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/
Email: Errol.Bragg@usda.govFor more information go to
Errol Bragg, Associate Deputy Administrator
Marketing Services Branch - USDA
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Room 2646 - S, Stop 0269
Washington, DC 20250-0269
Ph: 1-800-384-8704 or (202) 720-8317
Email: Errol.Bragg@usda.gov

Farmers Market Coloring Book
USAD/AMS
Download and modify this coloring book to meet the needs of your farmers market or your own market.
Only available on the web at www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing

"How to Buy" Guides!
USDA/AMS
Free copies of how to fruits, vegetables, meat and poultry. What is available is in the Resource Manual.
Contact 202-690-0531

Fresh Grown Publicity: An Easy Guide to Getting News Coverage (even if you know nothing about public relations or writing.)
By Jane Eckert and Diane Kline
This is a 115 page publication on how to get.."Fresh Grown Publicity" as easy as planting seeds with the media and watching them bloom. The steps outlined gained Eckert's Orchards $80,000 of free publicity. Cost is $39.95 plus $5.00 S&H.
Available from
Eckert AgriMarketing
8054 Teasdale Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63130
Ph: 314-862-6288
Emai: jane@eckertagrimarketing.com
www.eckertagrimarketing.com

2000 Ohio Fruit and Vegetable Growers Congress and North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference Proceedings.
Proceedings covers production, marketing of crops and livestock. Available at a cost of $10.00 from
Ohio Fruit and Vegetable Growers Congress
PO Box 479
Columbus, OH 43216

Know Your Market: How To Do Low-Cost Market Research
By David Frigstad
Book is designed to take any individual serious about conducting market research through all the necessary step to complete a research project.
Available from
Oasis Press/PSI Research
300 North Valley Drive
Grants Pass, OR 97526
800-228-2275

Wholesale and Alternative Markets Publications
USDA/AMS
Send, email or fax order to
Velma Lakins
Wholesale and Alternative Markets Program
R00m 2644- South
Washington, D.C. 20250
Ph: 202-720-8317
Email: valma.lakins@usda.gov

Marketing Tips for Sustainable Agriculture: a practical way to support sustainable agriculture
USDA/NRCS
This publication addresses basics of marketing and presents the points and processes needed to develop a marketing plan. It presents four entrepreneurs and how they applied the principles of marketing.
Available by on the web www.wsi.nrcs.usda.gov/products/sustainable-agriculture.html or
USDA/NRCS Watershed Science Institute
402-437-5578

Smart Marketing Bulletins
This newsletter is published by the Cornell Extension Service and contains articles that deal with farm marketing. An index of the "Horticultural Business Management and Marketing Program" is included in the Resource Manual.
Available online at: http://aem.cornell.edu/special_programs/hortmgt/pubs/smartmkt/
Some examples are:

- *Developing a Dairy Marketing Plan*

By Mark Stephenson
Smart Marketing Series
May 2002

- *Understand Your Milk Check First*
  By Craig Alexander
  Smart Marketing; April 2001
  Available at:

- *Smart Pricing Strategies*
  By Wen-fei L. Uva
  Smart Marketing; March 2001

- *Farm to Retail Price Relationships for Fluid Milk*
  By Charles F. Nicholson
  Smart Marketing Series July 2001

- *Knowing Your Market: The Most Challenging Part of a Business Plan*
  By Charles Schlough
  Smart Marketing Series
  February 2001

This Is Not Your Father's Farm: Marketing Ideas pg. 20-21
PASA Passages Newsletter; Fall 2001
By Brian Moyer
This article provides marketing tips and ideas for farmers.
Available in the Resource Manual or at
www.pasafarming.org
Ph: 814-349-9856

Marketing 101: Cattlemen as salesmen, not!
Cowboy Logic by Ryan Taylor
News article in Capital Press, March 29, 2002

15 Foolproof Ideas For Promoting Your Company
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/fool.txt

How to Use Marketing and Sales to Explode Your Home Business
By Sean M. Lyden
This article discusses what you need to know to launch and maintain a winning sales and marketing campaign.
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/marketing_sales_explode.txt

Food Marketing Institute (FMI)
The FMI conducts activities in research, education, public information, industry relations, and public affairs. Their website contains a store where you can purchase research

reports, books, videos or CD-Roms. It also provides news, statistics, food safety information, marketing information, and announcement of their conferences.
Website: http://www.fmi.org/
Ph: (202) 452-8444
Email: fmi@fmi.org

Marketing Resource Guide
Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
Web site: www.pasafarming.org
Ph: 814-349-9856

Select! Sonoma County: A Long Lived Marketing Program Faces Hard Times
A case study analyzing the effects of a public-private marketing organization, Select! Sonoma County's whose stated goal is "improving the economic well-being of Sonoma County agriculture and stimulate consumers to purchase local products.
By Maria Powell & Greg Lawless
Available at: http://www.farmprofitability.org/research/sonoma/index.htm

USDA Agricultural Marketing Workshops
This webpage contains announcements of USDA marketing workshops geared towards farmers. The announcement includes information on lodging and registration for the workshops.
http://marketingoutreach.usda.gov/info/index.htm

Evaluating Marketing Strategies for Small Farms in Mid-Atlantic Region
This is a 4-year collaborative effort among public and private organization to improve the viability of small fams in the Mid-Atlantic region. Study is looking at successes and challenges of "producer only" farmers' markets and CSA including a survey of shareholders. Check the web site for status of study and success stories.
www.smallfarmssuccess.info

The United States Market for Organic Foods and Beverages
Published by the ITC
This publication is based on a study on the market for organic products in the U.S.
Available at: http://www.intracen.org/mds/sectors/organic/foodbev.pdf

Market Research
US Small Business Administration (SBA)
This publication provides information on how to conduct market research.
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/mktres.txt

Marketing Research for Entrepreneurs and Small Business Managers
By David J. Snepenger
Montana State University-Bozeman
This publication identifies and discusses the four key steps to successful marketing.
Available online at: http://www.montana.edu/~wwwcommd/marketin.htm

Marketing Research and the Small Business
This publication provides information on the importance of market research for small businesses.
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/marketb.txt

Sell What You Sow: The Grower's Guide to Successful Produce Marketing
By Eric Gibson
This book has 32 chapters plus appendices and resources on high-value produce marketing. The book delivers hands on type information.
Order by
New World Publishing
11543
Quartz Drive, #1
Auburn, CA 95602
Ph: 530-823-3886

We're Gonna Be Rich! Growing Specialty Cut Flowers for Market
Frank and Pamel Arnosky, See Chapter VIII for table of contents.
Fairplain Publications
P.O.Box 3747
Lawrence, KS 66046
Ph: (785) 748-0609
Email: growing4market@earthlink.net

Backyard Market Gardening, The Entrepreneur's Guide to Selling What You Grow
by Andy Lee See Chapter VII I for table of contents.
Good Earth Publications (April 1995)
1702 Mountain View Road
Buena Vista, VA 24416
ISBN: 0962464805;
This book discusses how to sell quality garden produce to the public for fun and profit. The production side is discussed in less detail. The book is available from the publisher as well as from other common booksellers.

Marketing for Success: Creative Marketing Tools for the Agricultural Industry
By Robert J. Matarazzo with the assistance of Melissa F. Matarazzo
Doe Hollow Publishing (January 1998)
ISBN: 0965338509
This book, written by a direct marketing farmer, provides tools and techniques to aggressively market you agricultural products.
Cost: $18.95 (shipping and handling included)
Available from:
Doe Hollow Publishing
10 Doe Hollow Lane
Belvidere, NJ 07823

Ph: (908) 475-4460
Email: rjm@world2u.com

A New Look at Marketing
By Alan Barefield
Agricultural Extension Service (University of Tennessee) S) 351-C
This publication discusses how to successfully market a product or service to a highly discriminating public.
Available online at: www.utextension.utk.edu/spfiles/SP351C.pdf

Know Your Market: How to do Low-Cost Market Research
By David B. Frigstad
The Oasis Press/PSI Research Grants
Pass, Oregon 1995
This book is designed to assist small businesses or beginning business owners and executives in conducting their own market research.

Doing Your Own Market Research: Tips on Evaluating the Market for New Farm-Based Enterprises
Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University (1988)
This is a six-page tip sheet on steps to follow when evaluating a new business.
Hardcopies available from:
Ph: (607) 255-9832.

Successful Marketing Research: The Complete Guide to Getting and Using Essential Information About Your Customers and Competitors
Edward L. Hester
John Wiley & Sons, Inc (October, 1995)
ISBN: 0471123803
This book is discusses cost-effective way to gather essential information about customers and competitors.
This book is available from its publisher and other additional booksellers.

New Crop Opportunities Center
The New Crop Opportunities Center provides farmers with production and marketing information on new crops and value-added versions of current crops.
Website: http://www.uky.edu/Ag/NewCrops/aboutus.html
N-324 Agricultural Science Center
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40546-0091
Email: newcrops@ca.uky.edu

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC)
The AgMRC is an electronically based center that collects and interprets information about value-added agriculture. The center, which is a website, provides research, information about events and business development, directories, and has a website search

engine. They provide independent producers and processors with information that will help them build a successful value-added enterprise.
http://www.agmrc.org/
Ph: (866) 277-5567
Email: AgMRC@iastate.edu

Organic Marketing Resources
This publication is a resource list that includes general sources of information and sources that deal with the market for organic food and fiber products, and certified-organic products.
Available online at: http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/markres.html

Pricing Your Products
US Small Business Administration (SBA)
FM-13
Available online at: http://www.sba.gov/library/pubs/fm-13.pdf or
http://www.bizoffice.com/library/files/price.txt

Developing Effective Brochures
By Nancy Riggs
Illinois
ID: IL-IN-SG-95-8
This tip sheet is geared towards small businesses and provides information on how to develop low-cost, effective brochures and posters. It discusses audience, purpose, message, graphics, layout, and printer talk.
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33720002.html

Customer Aftercare: How to Spend Less and Sell More
By Ernest W. Nicastro
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/customer_aftercare.txt

Relationship Selling: The Path to Sales Success
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/path.txt

Good Customer Relations with Improved Personal Selling
By Dale Zetocha
North Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service (1986)
EC814
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33209601.html

Creating Advertising that Sells: Eliminate the Most Common and Costly Errors in Advertising
By Thom Reece
This publication takes a look at various profit-producing ideas.
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/advertising_sells.txt

Advertising a Small Business
By Edmond A. Bruneau
This publication looks at the how-to and benefits offered by various forms of advertising.
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/adver.txt

Advertising-Better Business Bureau Code of Advertising
Better Business Bureau (BBB)
This website contains the BBB's code of advertising.
Available online at: www.bbb.org/advertising/adcode.asp

Advertising Your Business
Yellow Pages Publishers Association (YPPA) and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
This publication provides information on the fundamentals of advertising planning.
Available online at: http://www.bizoffice.com/library/files/obd13.txt

Direct Marketing: Business Management Series
Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas
By Katherine Adam, Radhika Balasubrahmanyam and Holly Born
November 1999
This publication contains information on direct marketing alternatives that emphasizes niche, specialty and value–added crops. It features farm case studies, as well as information on enterprise budgets and promotion/publicity.
Available at: www.attra.org/attra-pub/directmkt.html

Direct Marketing: Resources
ATTRA
This publication contains information about where to locate direct marketing resources throughout the United States.
Available in Resource Manual and at
www.attra.ncat.org/attra and click on publications

Resources for Organic Marketing
ATTRA
Publication contains information about various organizations throughout the United States.
Available at www.attra.ncat.org and click on publications

Direct Farm Marketing and Tourism Handbook
Available online at: http://ag.arizona.edu/arec/pubs/dmkt/dmkt.html
Available from: Russ Tronstad, Extension Economist
Ph: (520) 621-2425
Email: tronstad@ag.arizona.edu

Direct Marketing of Ag Products to Tourists
By Dennis B. Propst, Patricia S. Newmyer, and Thomas E. Combrink
Michigan State University (1986)
Extension Bulletin 1960
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33839811.html

Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography
This publication is a 75-page bibliography of publications, reports, guides, surveys, production issues, marketing and small business manuals. Available online at: http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/bibliography.htm
To order, call (202) 690-0531

Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing
By Neil Hamilton
And funded by the USDA-SARE
This guide addresses legal questions producers might have about engaging in direct farm marketing and liability insurance. See Chapter XIII for table of contents.
Cost: $20
Available from:
Drake University Agricultural Law Center
Des Moines, IA 50311
Ph: (515) 271-2947.

Ranchers Learn Direct Marketing Techniques from Professional Hustler Pg.33
The Grassman Farmer May 2001 Vol 58 #5
By Alice Valenzuela

Barriers and Opportunities for Direct Marketing in the Philadelphia Region
Farmers' Market Trust; April 1999
Copies available from the Trust at:
1201 Chestnut Street 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Ph: (215) 568-0830
Fax: (215) 568-0882
Email: fmtrust@liberynet.org

Ace Components of Good Direct Marketing: Sales Coaching for People Who Don't Like Direct Selling
By Hilton Johnson
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/ace_direct_marketing.txt

An Analysis of Vegetable Farms: Direct Marketing Activities in New York State
This publication is a report on the direct marketing activities in New York State.
Available online at: http://www.iatp.org/labels/envcommodities/index.htm

Developing New Markets to Support Local Agriculture, Resource Packet
Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University
This publication contains information handed out at the Farming for the Future Leadership conference.
Available by calling: (607) 255-9832.

Establishing a Shared Use Commercial Kitchen
NX Level
This book details the planning, design, and budgetary considerations for developing an FDA approved, multi-tenant commercial kitchen.
More information available at: www.nx.level.org/ag.htm (you can also order the book here)
Available from:
University of Colorado at Denver
Colorado Center for Community Development
NxLeveL™ Training Network
Campus Box 128
P.O. Box 173364
Denver, CO 80217-3364

Understanding Cooperatives: Agricultural Marketing Cooperatives, Cooperative Information Report 45, Section 15
This publication is a four-page information sheet about marketing cooperatives functions, organization, operations and the new flexibility.
Available online at: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/cir4515.pdf

Cooperative Information Reports
This is a series of reports that provide information on cooperatives. A list of the reports and links to their PDF files is available at:
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/cooprpts.htm

Cooperative Research Reports
This is a series of research based reports that deal with cooperatives. A list of the research reports and links to their PDF files are available at:
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/research.htm

Rural Cooperative Publications
This website contains a list of all USDA and Rural Development cooperative publications, their prices, and ordering information.
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/cir4/cir4.htm

Better Board of Trade Website
This website contains an inexpensive, simple classifieds bulletin board system where organic and sustainable producers and buyers can meet.
http://www.mybbot.com/index.htm

Organic Trader Website
This website provides options for suppliers and buyers to buy and/or market their organic products.
http://www.organictrader.net/

AgExporter
USDA Foreign Agriculture Service
The Monthly Magazine for Food and Agriculture Exporters
This magazine provides tips on exporting, descriptions of markets with the greatest potential, and information on export assistance available from the U.S.D.A.
Available electronically at: http://ffas.usda.gov/info/agexporter/agexport.html
To receive a sample issue, call: (202) 720-7115
Email: info@fas.usda.gov

Horticultural Business Management and Marketing Program
This program offers curriculum-driven educational programs designed to enhance the competitive position of the New York fruit, vegetable, and ornamental horticultural industry.
Website: http://aem.cornell.edu/special_programs/hortmgt/about.htm
456 Warren Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 13743
Email: WL32@cornell.edu

All of the fact sheets from the *Operating a Small Farm* series are available online at: http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/frederick/pubs/

- **Operating a Profitable Small Farm Fact Sheet 17**
  Advertising and Promoting your Products
  Published by the Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland College Park, Eastern Shore
  Available online at: http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/frederick/pubs/Opfarm17.pdf

- **Operating a Profitable Small Farm Fact Sheet 15**
  Marketing Skills
  Published by the Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland College Park, Easter Shore
  Available online at: http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/frederick/pubs/Opfarm15.pdf

- **Operating a Profitable Small Farm Fact Sheet 13**
  Direct Marketing
  Published by the Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland College Park, Eastern Shore
  Available online at: http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/frederick/pubs/Opfarm13.pdf

Fact Sheets for Managing Agri-tourism and Nature-Tourism Operations
University of California, Small Farm Center

- Marketing Equals the Four Ps
- Marketing Your Enterprise
- Tips for Building Marketing and Community Partnerships
- Top Marketing Ideas for Agritourism Operations

Available in Resource Manual or
www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheets

Gift Manufacturer's Marketing Association: *Tools for Rural and Small-Scale Entrepreneurs*
This marketing association provides how-to information on the marketing of "gift products" (specialty foods, jewelry, woodcrafts, soap, herbals, etc). Their website provides related classifies, newsletter and information on their services.
Website: http://www.giftmarketing.org/
PO Box 709
Orofino, ID 83544
Fax: (208) 476-7238
Email: ruralocity@msn.com

Marketing Crafts and Tourist Products
North Central Regional Publication #445
Available online at: http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/pubs/SFNews/archive/93092.htm
Hardcopies available by calling, (402) 472-3023

Marketing Crafts and Other Products to Tourists
By Sherri Gahring, Shirley Niemeyer, Rae Reilly, and JaneAnn Stout
North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (1992)
ID: NCR445
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33809809.html

The art, science of market displays
Growing for Market, May 1996.
Available in Resource Manual

Mini-Farm, Maxi-Profits: Diverse crops and savvy marketing give these high-value growers the edge
By Ward Sinclair and Cass Peterson, published in "The New Farm," March/April 1994
Available in Resource Manual.

Farms.com
This company offers software tools and marketing services. Their website contains information on the company and its services and also serves as an information portal. The website features news, weather, a section on various agricultural markets and other resources that include a search feature, newsletters, and classifieds.

Website: http://www.farms.com
Ph: 1-877-438-5729
Email: Jennifer.jones@farms.com

Market Farm Forms: Spreadsheet Templates for Planning and Organizing Information on Diversified Market Farms
by Marcie A. Rosenzweig with Bill Kaye-Blake Available as CD Rom and hardcopy. This publication, which has earned praise from ATTRA for being user friendly, contains simple, non-linked spreadsheet templates for recordkeeping. This might be particularly helpful to producers who are trying to comply with the recordkeeping requirements for organic certification.
Cost: $49.95
Available from:
Full Circle Farm
3377 Early Times Lane, Auburn, CA 95603
Ph: (530) 885-9201
Email: fullcircle@jps.net
Or from:
Back40Books
26328 Locust Grove Road
Creola, Ohio 45622
Ph: (740) 596-9983
Email: locustgrove@ohiohills.com

Produce Handling for Direct Marketing, NRAES-52
By James A. Bartsch and Roger Kline
Publication addresses harvest, transport, storage, and display of produce.
Available from
Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service
Ph: 607-255-7654

Facilities for Roadside Markets, NRAES-52
Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service
Publication addresses site considerations, market layout, market structure and facilities.
Ph:607-255-7654

www.metrofarm.com
An electronic magazine of metropolitan agriculture showing numerous types of resources and marketing opportunities. It is worth a look!

Merchandising Education to Employees
The PMA video's and written material are used to increase farm market employee skills and development efforts. This material makes for a nice kernel of information around which much discussion can occur according to John Berry, Ag. Mkt'g Agent.
Available by contacting
John Berry

Penn State Cooperative Extension-Lehigh County
4184 Dorney Park Road
Alltentown, PA 18104
Ph: 610-391-9840
email: jwb15@psu.edu

Hudson Valley Network, Inc.
The organization operates a huge data base and presents information to the public via web site www.hvnet.com. Check it out!

The Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC)
Being developed by Jerry DeWitt, ISU with a USDA value added grant. Here is the web site to check it out at a later date:
www.agmrc.org

FoodMAP
A comprehensive clearinghouse of marketing and processing information on identifying new markets, learning about alternative agriculture opportunities, locating processing equipment, understanding processing requirement and ingredients and finding information on large variety of other topics.
www.foodmap.unl.edu

Approaching Food Service Establishment with Locally Grown Products
North Central Initiative for Small Farm Profitability-A USDA Funded Project
The report summarizes the initial findings of a survey of members of the Chefs Collaborative organization.
Available from
Food Processing Center
Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of Nebraska,
143 Filley Hall, East Campus
Lincoln, NE 68583

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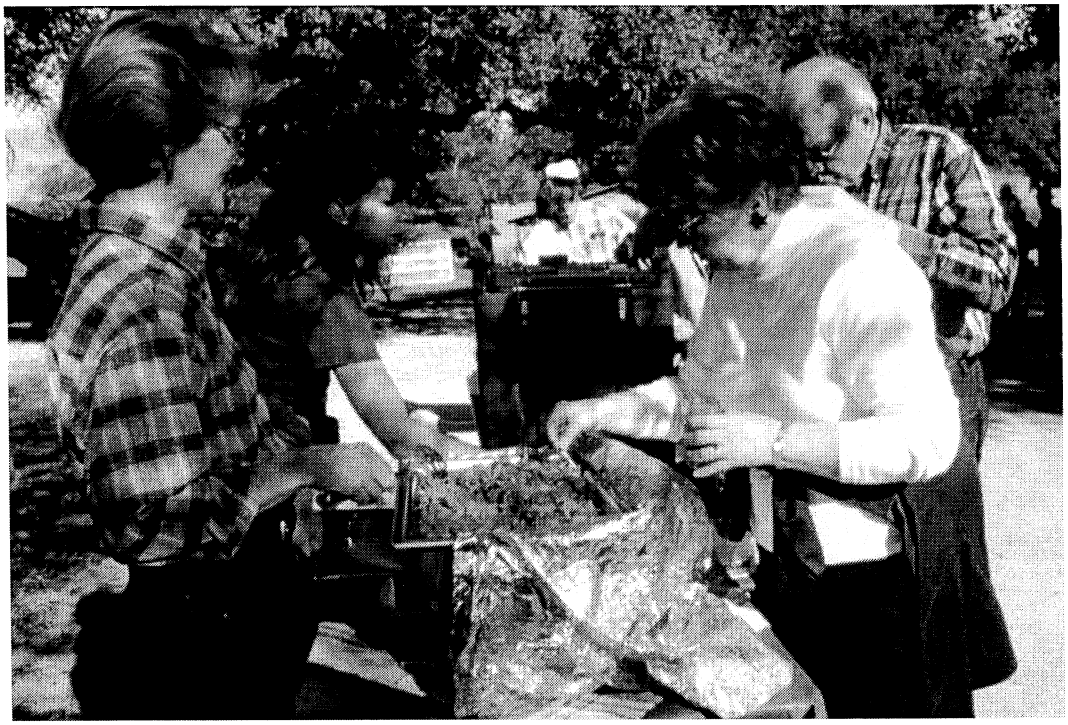
The Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) is the national outreach arm of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program administered by USDA-CSREES. This bulletin was produced in partnership with the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT).

Also available at:
www.sare.org/san/htdocs/pubs/

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE N·E·T·W·O·R·K

Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers



CATTLE RANCHER PEGGY SECHRIST (IN PLAID SHIRT), AND HUSBAND, RICHARD, INTRODUCE NEW CUSTOMERS TO PASTURE-RAISED BEEF BY STAGING TASTINGS AT MARKETS AROUND THE AUSTIN, TEXAS, AREA. PHOTO BY JERRY DEWITT

RICHARD AND PEGGY SECHRIST RAISED BEEF ON PASTURE without chemicals for four years — selling it to restaurants, at farmers markets and to visitors at their Fredericksburg, Texas, ranch — before they improved their meat sales by pulling them under one roof.

In June 1999, they opened Homestead Healthy Food Store on the edge of their small town. There, they sell their organic beef, chicken and eggs—as well as organic produce raised by neighboring farmers in the Texas Hill Country west of Austin. Customers have responded, supporting the farmer-led venture with local dollars.

"We decided to be a really good source of high quality, very nutritious and very healthy food," says Peggy Sechrist. "That means locally grown food without any synthetic residuals—and a good selection of those foods."

The Sechrists did not open the store and right away pile the shelves high with tempting treats. Instead, they set out meats in refrigerated cases and asked their customers, many of whom had been driving 90 miles to Austin health food stores, what else they wanted. The store now includes organic produce, cereal, pasta, juices, dairy products and even certified organic condiments, most purchased locally. Between August and September, store sales jumped by 30 percent, and the Sechrists expect the store to break even in the coming months.

"We built our inventory based on what our customers told us," Sechrist says. "They can buy a nice

DENNIS AND SUE RABE OF LAKE CITY, MINN., RECEIVED A SARE PRODUCER GRANT TO HELP THEM PROMOTE THEIR BEEF AND PORK PRODUCTS TO ROCHESTER-AREA RESTAURANTS AND SUPERMARKETS.

selection of food for every meal of the day. We have had a healthy rate of growth, and it looks like it will be a profitable enterprise."

Good marketing is becoming a must for small agricultural enterprises to be successful. Rather than accepting non-negotiable prices offered by wholesalers, direct marketers put the power to turn a profit back in their own hands. Alternative marketing outlets offer direct connections to customers, providing them an opportunity to get fresh products and knowledge about how they've been grown. Like the Sechrists, producers can learn what their customers need.

The bottom line: Whether the product is beef or fresh-picked vegetables, selling products directly to consumers offers farmers a better price. This bulletin profiles successful direct marketers across the country and includes tips about how to start a number of alternative agricultural marketing enterprises. For more information, use the list of resources on pp. 19–20.

Marketing Strategies

Direct marketing strategies are numerous and varied. Before beginning to sell direct, identify markets with special needs that offer large enough volumes to provide profitable returns.

One of the most commonly recognized niche markets is the growing demand for organically grown foods. Range-fed beef and pastured poultry products also appear to have a growing popularity among consumers.

Consider selling at roadside stands and farmers markets, opening a pick-your-own operation, creating a subscription marketing service, offering on-farm entertainment, marketing long distance or marketing to restaurants. You can go it alone, or you can team up with others in a cooperative. Most farmers use a combination of marketing methods, finding that in marketing as well as in production, diversity helps provide stability and sustainability.

FARMERS MARKETS

Between 1996 and 1998, the number of U.S. farmers markets grew from 2,410 to 2,746, reflecting an increasing preference for farm-fresh produce. Many customers also prefer to buy produce from farmers they know and trust, especially the small family farmer who helps support communities. A group of Maine farmers market customers responding to a 1999 survey indicated supporting local farmers was their second major reason for shopping there, behind product quality.

Farmers markets usually offer a secure, regular and flexible outlet where a vendor can sell a wide range of

Consumers' Most Important Reasons for Shopping at the Orono (Maine) Farmers Market

Reason	Percent
Quality of the products	72.5
Support local farmers	59.6
Friendly atmosphere	38.2
Health and food safety concerns	29.8
Convenience	13.5
Good price	10.7
Variety	8.4
Good service	5.0
Consistency	2.2

Source: Jolly, Desmond. 1999. "Home Made"—The Paradigms and Paradoxes of Changing Consumer Preferences: Implications for Direct Marketing. Presented Feb. 22, 1999, Agricultural Outlook Forum.

fresh produce, plants, value-added farm products and crafts. Beginning direct-marketers may want to start with farmers markets. To locate farmers markets in your area, go to www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/ or call USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service at (202) 720-8317.

Cass Peterson, who has direct-marketed vegetables and herbs for 16 years, sells at two farmers markets in the Washington, D.C., area. Peterson's stand attracts a large crowd of return customers. "We need regular customers who seem willing to accept an eclectic mix of produce so we can get to know their tastes and what to grow for them," she says.

Peterson can count on them to provide a reliable source of income no matter what is doing well in the fields. "Our customers are very loyal to our stand," she says. "We joke that if a drought wiped out every living thing on the farm, we could still sell rocks from the field."

Some vendors become known for having a wide range of the most popular vegetables, others for a specialty such as cut flower bouquets or truckloads of sweet corn. Selling at a farmers market may provide contacts to develop additional markets such as subscription sales (see p. 6) and selling to ethnic groups.

A group of Kansas produce farmers who wanted a direct outlet for their fruit and vegetables took a small grant from the SARE-supported Kansas Rural Center and opened a farmers market in the rural town of Peabody. Starting with 14 interested farm families, the group met monthly to organize a market that would attract people from the surrounding area. Each vendor pays $20 per market, a fee that goes toward ads and signs.

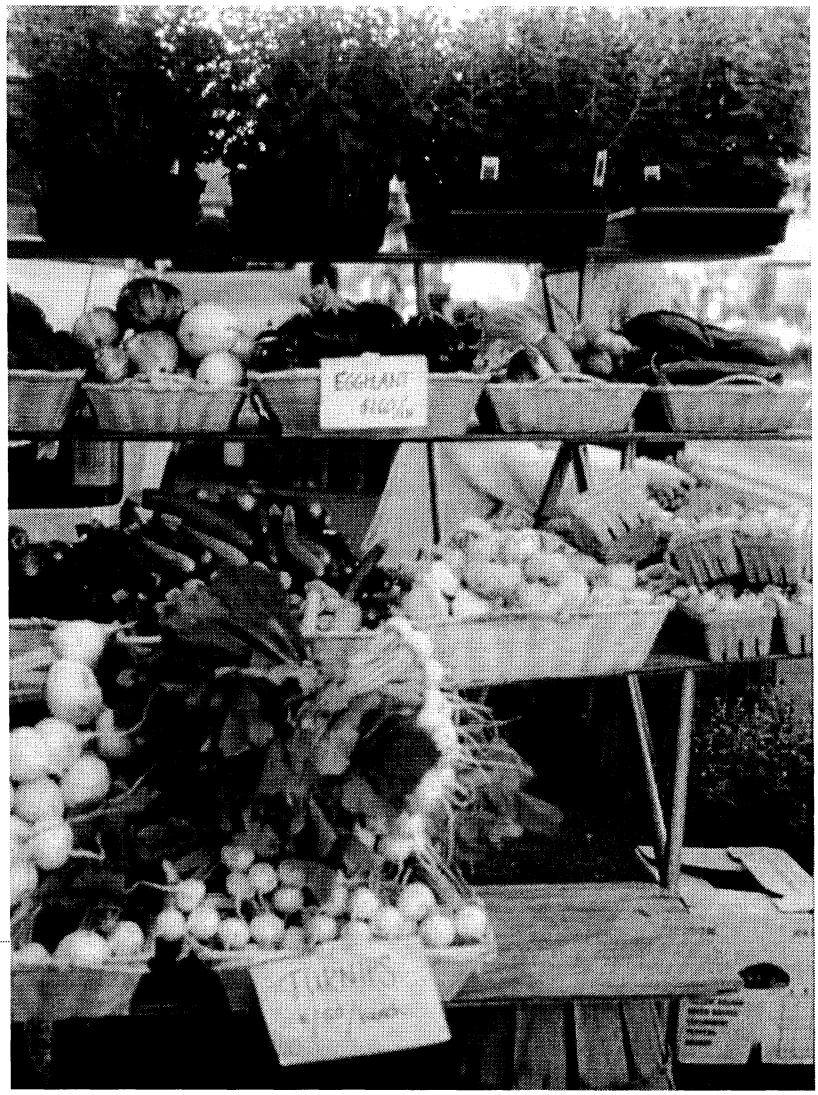
The group held a community pig roast for 100 people to lure new supporters to the market.

"We wanted people to know how good things taste when they are grown on local farms by local people," says organizer Marylin Jones, a Peabody farmer.

Most growers enjoy interacting with other farmers, and many say that cooperation is as important as competition. Expect to have slow days when you do not sell all that you bring, and be prepared to encounter hagglers. You may want to investigate gleaning possibilities; many food banks and homeless shelters will pick up extras directly from your stand or farm.

If you're interested in selling at farmers markets, keep in mind:

- Successful markets are located in busy or central places and are well-publicized.
- The more farmers and farm products at the market, the more customers.
- A good manager is necessary to promote the market and enforce its rules.
- Make sure you don't run out of produce to sell to late-arriving customers.
- Colorful, layered displays of your products are enhanced by signs, packaging, even the clothes you wear.
- A diversity of produce displayed in an attractive manner will attract customers.
- Price in round numbers to speed sales and eliminate problems making change.
- Be as friendly as possible. A big draw of farmers markets is the chance for customers to talk to farmers about their operations.
- Don't deliberately or drastically undersell your fellow farmers.
- Get feedback from your customers. You can learn a lot about what they find desirable—and what to grow next season.
- Selling at a farmers market may provide contacts for other sales, such as special orders or subscriptions.



AN OCTOBER HARVEST AT THE WEEKLY TAKOMA PARK, MD., FARMERS MARKET, WHICH HAS BECKONED CUSTOMERS FOR CLOSE TO 20 YEARS. PHOTO BY VALERIE BERTON

PICK-YOUR-OWN

Pick-your-own marketing turns the job of harvesting, packing and transporting your production over to the customer. While it can be a good way to offset labor costs, many farmers find it most profitable when paired with an on-farm tourism activity.

Earnie and Martha Bohner, who run a successful pick-your-own operation in the Missouri Ozarks, created a farm that draws visitors after beginning with no buildings, electricity or running water in 1983. Today, their 80-acre Persimmon Hill Berry Farm attracts carload after carload of customers.

They began with a long-term plan based on family goals and values. Within 10 years of purchasing the land, they were cultivating 3 acres of blueberries, 1 acre of blackberries, 2,000 hardwood logs for shiitake mushrooms and 120 apple trees. In addition to the products, they provide amenities: clean restrooms, a picnic table and shade trees — along with tidy field edges.

"We create a place where people can enjoy themselves," Earnie Bohner says. "People don't come all the way out here to get cheap food. They come because it's fun and the berries are absolutely fresh. As much as we can, we give them contact with 'the farmers.' The more we can do that, the more people go away with that memory."

Although the popularity of pick-your-own farming has declined since the 1970s and 1980s, it remains a great marketing option for small growers with a good client base. It reduces harvest labor needs and eliminates most post-harvest tasks such as grading, washing, packing, cooling and storing.

Before you proceed, however, consider what opening your farm to the public means. You need liability insurance, space for parking, ability to supervise customers, and, perhaps most important, a willingness to sacrifice your privacy. If you're not a "people person," pick-your-own likely is not for you.

The success of pick-your-own marketing is often in the details, such as:

- Having a phone with an answering machine that gives prices, conditions and operating hours
- Maintaining evening and weekend hours
- Creating a pleasant and educational setting for families, many with small children
- Providing ample parking, good roads and clean trails
- Supplying containers, even if customers are told to bring their own
- Displaying clear signs indicating rules, prices, hours, etc.

FARMS STANDS, ROADSIDE MARKETS AND ON-FARM SALES

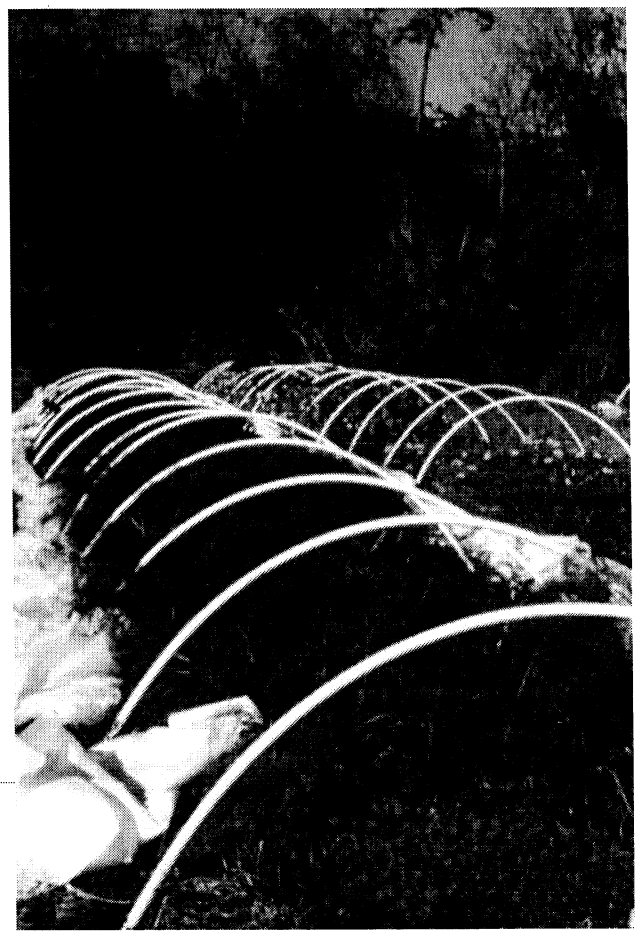
While many people enjoy harvesting their own fruits and vegetables, others prefer a quicker, more convenient way to buy fresh produce. At Persimmon Hill Farm, the checkout station also functions as a place to display and sell pre-harvested fresh produce, along with the farm's many value-added products and accessories such as cookbooks and berry cobbler baking dishes

Converting part of a barn for on-farm sales on specific days also draws customers. By locating a farm store right on the farm, producers can interact more with customers, learning their preferences and gaining their support.

"It creates closer communication with the customer and, in our case, has created a 'friends of the farm' group," says Skip Glover, an organic vegetable farmer in Douglasville, Ga., who receives high prices for such specialty crops as edible soybeans. "It allows folks to be more a part of their local farm."

If you're interested in setting up a farm stand, consider:

- From building materials to permits, establishing a stand can prove expensive.
- Stands are sometimes most successful when they feature only one or two high-demand items such as fresh-picked sweet corn, early watermelons or pumpkins.
- Location is very important; busy roadways or other



DRAWING FAMILIES TO THE FARM USUALLY RESULTS IN ON-FARM SALES. VISITORS TO THIS VEGETABLE FARM NEAR GAINESVILLE, FLA., ENJOY A STROLL AS PART OF A GROUP TOUR. PHOTO BY VALERIE BERTON

well-trafficked areas are almost essential. Consider, however, the traffic speed and how to give motorists a heads-up to slow down. You also will need to provide parking. Contact your state Department of Agriculture to find out whether you can set up a stand along state roads.

- More elaborate roadside stands and small seasonal markets often prove successful for direct marketers. They commonly feature a wide variety of retail products along with those actually produced on the farm.
- Check your local extension office for information about how to construct sales stands, small market buildings and produce displays.
- State Departments of Agriculture and Departments of Highways may be able to provide tourism signs.

ENTERTAINMENT FARMING AND AGRI-TOURISM

Pairing farms with entertainment can draw families—and their recreational dollars. Seasonal festivals, hayrides, petting zoos, on-farm classes and workshops bring more potential customers to your farm. Another option for recreational farming is leasing wooded land or marginal cropland for hunting, fishing or hiking.

You can weave farm entertainment events with regional tourism efforts. The Archway Regional Tourism Association (ARTA) in eastern Kentucky links local farmers with Natural Bridge State Park. For small farmers looking for alternatives to tobacco, agri-tourism in this region — known for its scenic resorts and parks — has been a godsend.

Growers sell at a farmers market inside the park each summer as part of the Mountain Market Festival. Widely publicized by ARTA, the event features chef presentations and live music. Every farmer who participates sells out.

"We wanted to help the agri-tourism organization become self-sustaining, and it has done that," says Karen Armstrong-Cummings, who works with area farmers as a staff member of the Commodity Growers Cooperative. The cooperative received a SARE grant in 1997 to help it build markets for local farm products.

Tree growers have helped spawn popular "Christmas in the Mountains" weekends. Participants receive coupons for a Christmas tree from a local farm and a gift from a local craftperson or artist.

The coupons were a strong draw, Armstrong-Cummings says, bringing people from as far away as Louisville.

The partnership, which includes Extension agents, farmers, craftsmen and parks officials, helped the Commodity Growers Corporation create a statewide agri-tourism award to recognize projects that bring together farmers and tourism. The first $500 award went to Owensboro orchardist Billy Reid, whose apple festival brings 20,000 people to the city.

If you're interested in entertainment farming or agri-tourism, keep in mind:

- Agri-tourism ends farmer isolation and offers the opportunity to make new friends and build stronger links to the community.
- Some disadvantages could include interference with main farm activities, potential low financial return and high liability risk.
- In the tourist business, you are never really off duty. Holidays likely mean a full workday. Be prepared for late-night calls.
- Social skills and a scenic, clean, attractive farm are crucial for success in agri-tourism and can overcome a location that is less than ideal.
- Call tour bus companies and your local or regional tourism and convention bureau for information on attracting tour buses to your farm.
- State Departments of Agriculture often offer assistance in setting up farm festivals and similar activities. State tourism bureaus also can offer a wealth of ideas and information.

"People don't come all the way out here to get cheap food. They come because it's fun and the berries are absolutely fresh."

Earnie Bohner
Lampe, Mo., farmer

"We want our customers to be more sensitive to the farm situation. The more they understand the connection of family farms to healthy communities, the better for us and farmers everywhere."

Molly Bartlett
Hiram, Ohio, farmer

SUBSCRIPTION MARKETING AND CSA FARMS

The concepts of subscription marketing and community supported agriculture (CSA) are still new to most farmers and consumers. However, since CSA first premiered in the U.S. in the late 1980s, it has revolutionized thinking about how farmers and consumers can participate in a local food system based on mutual trust.

Subscription marketing describes any of a variety of arrangements in which the farmer agrees to deliver a certain quantity of produce to the consumer on a regular basis throughout the season for a set price. CSA is a more organized and defined form of subscription marketing in which consumer-members invest in the farm operation by paying up-front for the harvest. They share in many of the risks of crop failure, but also share the bounty of a good year. Many CSA farms ask members to commit time and labor to the operation. This not only lowers costs, but also allows members to learn more about what it really means to grow food.

Ohio farmer Molly Bartlett, who has run a CSA operation for seven years, expanded community participation with an enterprising mix of projects involving her non-farming neighbors. She publishes a weekly newsletter to generate interest in the harvest, along with a recipe sheet. When members expressed interest in preserving foods harvested from the farm, she started an on-farm canning center with the aid of a SARE grant. Bartlett has offered sessions on making dilly beans, herbal vinegar, canned tomatoes and beer.

Underlying all this effort is Bartlett's desire to help people understand more about farming and her deep sense of community. "We want our customers to be more sensitive to the farm situation," she says. "The more they understand the connection of family farms to healthy communities, the better for us and farmers everywhere."

Connecting neighbors to the farm dovetails nicely with Bartlett's need to keep her 70-acre certified organic farm profitable. "I think CSA can be more profitable than farmers markets," she says. "They not only allow farmers to stay on the farm, but also give shareholders a chance to participate in the production of their food."

No two CSA farms are alike. Most supply all the produce. They also might provide other items, such as flowers, berries, nuts, eggs, meat, grains or honey. Farmers may ask members to come to the farm to pick up their shares, or they might deliver them to centrally located distribution sites. Some CSA farmers provide shares in bags; others let members choose from bulk displays. Families run some CSA farms, while some team with other producers to supply additional goods.

Like Bartlett, many CSA farmers produce weekly or biweekly newsletters describing the current harvest and featuring recipe ideas. Others reach out electronically through list servers or Internet sites.

Terrafirma Farm, a 99-acre certified organic farm whose CSA serves 380 members at 24 drop-off sites in the San Francisco Bay area, uses a web site, www.terrafirmafarm.com, to tell current and potential members all about their CSA. A look at the web site will give you answers to questions such as "What do I get?" and "How do I join?"

"For city-dwellers, CSA provides a connection with nature, a convenient, safe and reliable source for healthy, high-quality vegetables," says Valerie Engelman, Terrafirma Farm CSA coordinator. "For us, it provides a

buffer from rapidly fluctuating market prices while providing a secure source of income."

When evaluating subscription marketing as an option for your farm, consider:

- Your location. Can you find enough members? Can they drive to your farm?
- Your tolerance for hosting members on your farm.
- Your willingness to sponsor events on the farm, publish a newsletter and provide other services that customers demand.
- Your resources for distributing produce to drop-off sites or at your farm.

CSA informational resources abound. See p. 20.

COOPERATIVE MARKETING

Some direct marketers go it alone, but many find that profitability comes through working with others.

Terry and LaRhea Pepper grew their first crop of organic cotton near O'Donnell, Texas, in 1991, contracting with a single buyer to purchase the entire crop. Later that season, the buyer reneged, and they found themselves with bales of raw cotton and no buyer. Scrambling for an alternative, the Peppers decided to try converting the raw product into denim. LaRhea Pepper, who had majored in fashion merchandising in college, contacted companies interested in finished fabrics and secured a new buyer.

"We realized, then and there, that security and profitability depended on our assuming responsibility for processing and marketing our cotton," La Rhea Pepper says. "We don't rely on anyone else."

The Peppers joined forces with other organic and transitional cotton growers to form the Texas Organic Cotton Marketing Cooperative. Through the co-op, they shared marketing expenses and risks, then dealt with buyers as a team.

"We were realistic," LaRhea Pepper says. "We realized we couldn't deliver a consistent supply as the only producer."

When the cooperative was formed in 1991, it brought together 40 farm families who sought to market their organic and transitional cotton. The cotton co-op sells raw, baled cotton or an array of processed products such as personal hygiene aids and a diversity of fabrics through their web site, www.organictexas.com.

As more members of the co-op were drawn into marketing decisions, they also saw the need to create new products, expand markets and promote themselves. They diversified the product line to include chambray, flannel, twill and knits. Lower grade, shorter staple cotton, not suited to clothing, is used to make blankets and throws. Most recently, an "Organic Essentials" division was created to manufacture facial pads, cotton balls and tampons. The co-op board continues to look for other opportunities to add value to their cotton, and for partners in the industry who are willing to share the cost and risk.

At first, it was difficult for farmers who had been independent all their lives to make decisions together. "When a group decides to work together, people need to be willing to sacrifice their individual rights," LaRhea Pepper says. "Most growers shy away from marketing and processing, preferring to sell raw cotton rather than get involved in more complex aspects of the industry. That attitude was hard to change."

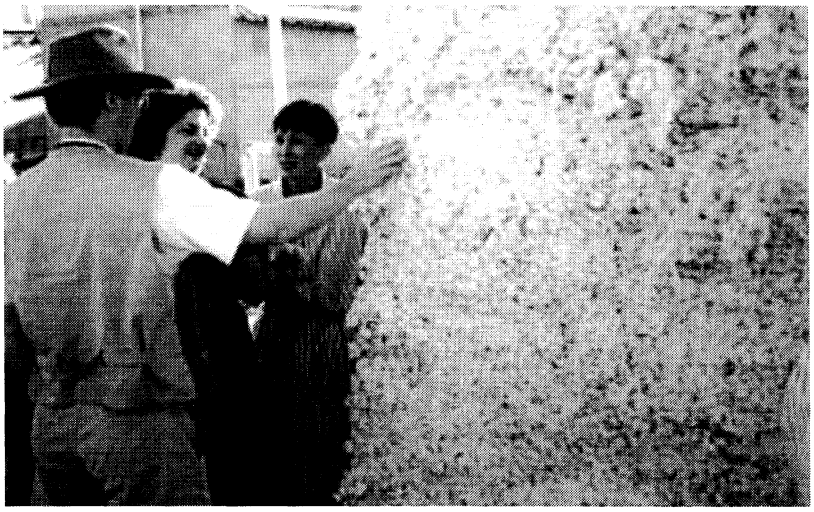
The benefits of marketing agricultural products with others also appealed to Janie Burns of Nampa, Idaho, who raises 30 ewes, 40 lambs, 70 chickens and assorted vegetables on 10 acres. A relatively small farmer, she is a large-scale promoter of local food systems. Burns used a SARE grant to investigate whether a growers' cooperative would help area farmers become more efficient and profitable while offering their community access to fresh, sustainably grown vegetables.

"We went to every list of people involved in direct marketing," Burns recalls. They surveyed 150 people within the Boise/Twin Falls area, which shares a similar climate and crops, about their interest and production capabilities. Then, they identified markets, such as restaurants, natural food stores, a cafeteria, a hospital and a school, to learn their interests, habits and constraints.

A workshop with representatives from successful co-ops developed in other regions—including the Georgia

OPPOSITE: WHEN WARD SINCLAIR AND CASS PETERSON LEFT WASHINGTON, D.C., TO START FARMING, THEY MADE THEIR FIRST VEGETABLE SALES AS SUBSCRIPTIONS TO WASHINGTON POST EMPLOYEES. TODAY, FLICKERVILLE MOUNTAIN FARM'S MAIN MONEY-MAKER IS FARMERS' MARKETS. PHOTO BY VALERIE BERTON

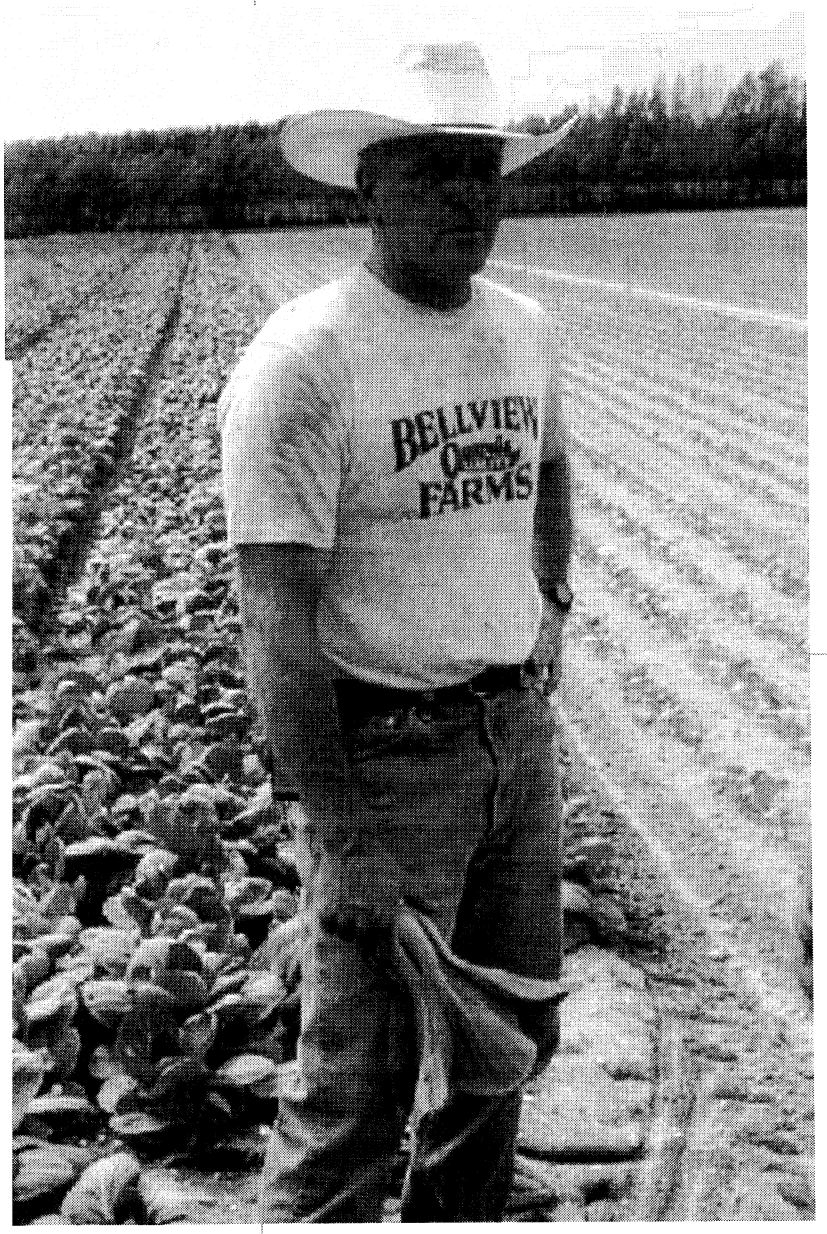
THIS PAGE: THE TEXAS ORGANIC COTTON MARKETING COOPERATIVE'S COTTON, SHOWN HERE BEFORE PROCESSING, IS SOLD TO CLOTHING COMPANIES LIKE PATAGONIA. PHOTO BY JIM CHILDRESS



BUENA, N.J., VEGETABLE PRODUCER JIM QUARELLA IMPROVED PROFITS BY SELLING SPECIALTY CROPS, SUCH AS THESE ASIAN GREENS, TO MARKETS IN NEW YORK CITY. PHOTO BY VALERIE BERTON

Grown Organic Cooperative and Pennsylvania's Tuscarora Organic Cooperative—presented Idaho growers with information about forming and operating a cooperative. They agreed to form their own co-op under the name Idaho Organics Cooperative, Inc.

To be a member, growers must be certified organic. Their product line ranges from early herbs and lettuces to "virtually everything" by mid-season. Some growers are relatively small-scale, while others plant several hundred acres of potatoes and dry beans and market only part of their crop through the co-op.



Every Sunday, co-op growers provide lists of what they will have for delivery on Thursday, including quantity, description (such as "first of the season"), and price. The list is compiled and faxed to customers. By Tuesday evening, growers receive "pick" lists that tell them how much of each item they need to pack for each customer. On Thursday morning, growers bring produce to a central location to divide up boxes for delivery. Customers are billed at the end of each month, and growers get paid once a month.

In Costillo, N.M., where Lonnie Roybal farms, there is plenty of land and water, but little industry and economic development. With funding from a SARE grant, members of a local co-op demonstrated that area farmers could not only grow wheat organically, but also market it locally under their own label. Eight growers belong to the three-year old organization.

First, they began sharing equipment: a tractor, a plow, a disc and a leveler. "Last year we only sold wheat," Roybal says. "This year, we have gone to the second step—milling." The co-op sends the wheat to a mill in Denver, then the flour is sold to Cloud Cliff Bakery in Santa Fe. The bakery bought 38,000 pounds of flour and asked for more. The bread is sold under the brand name "Nativo," meaning "native."

The co-op, which also sells grains to organic livestock farmers, acquired grain bins and are close to securing a mill. "This will add value to our product, and allow us to market the complete grain in varying forms such as rolled wheat, bran and flour in 2- and 5-pound bags with our own logo," Roybal says. Another potential

CONDUCTING ETHNIC MARKET RESEARCH

Ethnic groups tend to form close-knit communities with strong cultural ties to their homeland. Food remains a strong connection for many new U.S. residents, who present a potentially concentrated and lucrative market for farmers.

The New York City-based nonprofit Just Food received a SARE grant in 1997 to connect area farmers with communities inside the city seeking ethnic food.

"We know 8 million people are here buying food, but most of it is not locally grown," says Kathy Lawrence, Just Food executive director. "We want to create New York City-based support for regional farmers so they can stay in business."

Farmers growing for the Just Food project produce Italian and traditional Latin vegetables and herbs, goat meat and live poultry.

marketing strategy is to sell whole-wheat berries, for which demand is growing.

Cooperative marketing can be a great opportunity—or a headache. Here are some tips on how to make it work for you:

- The USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Services program offers information and assistance in setting up and managing a cooperative marketing effort. It's a great place to start (see Resources, p. 19).
- Consider a marketing club, an informal cooperative that relies on using member marketing skills. Many extension offices offer training programs and assistance in setting up marketing clubs.
- Join a nonprofit farmer network group to share ideas and inspiration.
- As always, adequate market research and business planning are keys to successful cooperative marketing. It pays to research well ahead of time. Factors such as inadequate market demand and undercapitalization are danger signs for a cooperative.
- The club or cooperative should be made up of members who have common goals, or boredom and frustration can ensue. Member commitment is crucial for success. Members have to be able to give up a little individuality to work together.

SALES TO RESTAURANTS AND SPECIALTY FOOD STORES

Restaurants and specialty stores such as health food outlets long have been prize markets for many growers, as they and their customers often are willing to pay premiums for quality, freshness and reliable delivery.

CRAIG MAPEL (LEFT), A MARKETING SPECIALIST FROM THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, USED A SARE GRANT TO RESTART AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN COSTILLO. MAPEL TAUGHT GROWERS LIKE LONNIE ROYBAL (RIGHT) AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AS WELL AS PROCESSING, PACKAGING AND MARKET POSITIONING. PHOTO BY JEFF CAVEN

Cass Peterson, who raises vegetables and herbs in south central Pennsylvania, sells to some of the finest restaurants in the Washington, D.C., area. For Peterson, cultivating relationships with chefs is worth the effort. Once they know her produce is fresh and tasty, they create dishes around what is fresh that week.

The communication goes both ways. "Get to know how the chef wants the produce picked, which will depend on how he or she intends to use it," Peterson says. "If squash soup is on the menu, larger ones are okay. If the squash is to be steamed and presented whole on the plate, they can't be longer than 3 inches."

At her web site, www.flickerville.com, Peterson gives other reasons for her success: "Our varieties are chosen carefully for flavor, not 'shippability.' Many of our favorites are so-called heirloom varieties, treasures from a time when vegetables were grown for their taste, not

Bridging the cultural gaps between consumer and producer is both a challenge and an opportunity. Just Food, in cooperation with the Farming Alternatives Program at Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension of New York City, brought together farmers and residents of the Williamsburg neighborhood in Brooklyn to plan and implement a pilot marketing project. The community is home to many ethnic groups, such as Latinos, Hasidic Jews, Italians and Poles.

Through interviews conducted with approximately 65 restaurants, retailers, and wholesalers serving the area, the group sought to learn what foods people bought, where they bought them, quality and supply needs and their willingness to buy from regional growers. The study turned up valuable information for farmers.

The purchasers were satisfied with the quality and variety of produce they received through conventional channels. Low-income ethnic groups such as those surveyed were not willing to pay more for higher quality produce. Thus, chain supermarkets were clearly the hardest to crack as a possible market, due to consolidated delivery and the perceived advantages of lower prices with high-volume purchases. However, middlemen who buy for resale—called "jobbers"—who serve smaller-scale buyers showed some interest.

Restaurants appeared more interested than grocery stores in buying regional produce because of its freshness and better quality. "The process [of securing a market] is slow," says Lawrence. "Restaurants are reluctant to place an order from the farmers unless they see the product. The farmers are reluctant to raise the crop until they have a commitment from the buyer. A lot of what we're working on is relationship-building."

The Just Food project kicked off by creating a farmer-ethnic community connection through El Puente, a community-based organization that is becoming a hub for multiple market outlets. By spring 1999, El Puente had helped an area farmer start a 25-member CSA, expanded farmer participation in a farmers market and cultivated about 10 restaurants that now place weekly orders.

Starting with small sales of specialty grain to a few regional bakeries, the Folkvords have transformed their wheat farm into Wheat Montana, selling packaged raw grain and grain mixes, flours and bakery goods.

their ability to withstand cross-continental truck rides."

Peterson advises that small, diversified farms do best selling to restaurants that change their menus daily, or at least weekly. "Restaurants with ever-changing menus will be happy to feature whatever is abundant and in season. It's a good idea to let them know a week or two in advance of when something is likely to be ripe and ready to harvest. They need time to dream up those menus."

An Indiana grower's use of integrated pest management and shrewd marketing attracted a bevy of new customers to his consumer-oriented crop farm. In 1992, Brian Churchill began using integrated pest management on some of Countryside Farm's 100 acres of sweet corn, melons, tomatoes and other produce. In 1994, with a SARE producer grant, Churchill began scouting for pests, withholding routine spraying and building better habitat for beneficial insects. He cut insecticide costs drastically, then decided to use that as a marketing hook.

That summer, Churchill held an "expo" for 50 chefs from top restaurants in nearby Louisville, Ky. "We showed we can produce the volumes they need in as good or better a quality as they can get anywhere," Churchill says.

Two chefs now use the farm's name on their menus. Another has given out free ears of Churchill's low-input popcorn as a promotion. Other specialty marketing efforts to promote Countryside Farm's low-pesticide crops include a customer newsletter, farm tours for school groups, talks at regional horticulture conferences and serving as a location for a television station's gardening show.

Here are some considerations for the prospective restaurant supplier:

- Upscale restaurants and specialty stores pay top dollar for quality produce and hard-to-get items. According to Eric Gibson's *Sell What You Sow!* growers can expect a minimum of 10 percent over wholesale terminal prices for standard items at mainstream restaurants.
- Most restaurants buy in limited quantities, and sales may not justify the necessary frequent deliveries. Growers should start lining up buyers a year in advance and develop secondary outlets such as processing or selling at lower-end markets.
- Call buyers for appointments and bring samples.
- Major selling points include daily deliveries, special varieties, freshness, personal attention and a brochure describing your farm and products.
- Chefs often prefer to buy semi-prepared food, since they usually have a hard time finding affordable labor. These include pre-sliced vegetables, pre-peeled potatoes, pre-washed greens, or tomatoes and potatoes sorted according to size and variety.
- When planning your crop mix, talk with chefs and specialty buyers, who are constantly looking for something new. Many growers just plant what sold well last year, but successful restaurant sales depend on meeting the changing needs of your buyers.

MAIL ORDER AND INTERNET

As mail order and Internet sales continue to grow, creative farmers are jumping on board. Both spell convenience for busy people looking for unique products. The good news: You don't need to be a copywriter or a computer expert to tap into millions of potential buyers, although maintaining a successful web site is time-consuming and challenging. You may want to hire a helper or find a friendly computer whiz to help you.

If you have a good customer base, these strategies offer good ways to diversify and expand marketing outlets. Earnie and Martha Bohner, who have a pick-your-own farm and farm stand in Missouri, spread their reach from one state to the rest of the nation through a Christmas gift mail-order catalog. Previous customers and gift recipients can count on receiving a folder describing mouth-watering packages. The catalog cover features the farm's black Labrador retrievers watching St. Nick's sleigh heading off into the Ozark night.

The Hartzler Family Dairy in Wooster, Ohio, uses its web site to tell customers more about their farm and how they produce their special cream-topped milk in its many iterations: skim, low-fat, whole and chocolate. Product pictures show milk in glass bottles with colorful labels accompanied by lively text to encourage sales.

"2% Reduced Fat: This is a good, flavorful choice for

many families," the description reads. "You will see a small cream line inside the top of these red-labeled bottles. Gently shake the bottle to spread the creaminess throughout the milk before serving it."

Those interested in how their milk is produced can click on "The Process" and learn about how the family produces milk from cows raised on grain grown without commercial fertilizers and pesticides.

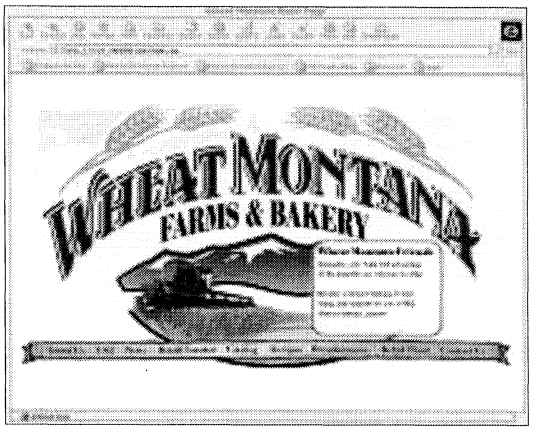
Links lead to you to one of 66 Ohio stores. Check out www.hartzler.eyemg.com

Bring customers back to your web site by sending e-mail announcements about new features. Maintain an electronic list of customers, then send them weekly or monthly announcements that beckon them back to your site.

The main disadvantage to mail order and Internet marketing is fierce competition. Attracting buyers can be difficult when hundreds of other farmers offer similar products in catalogs or web sites. Keep in mind that you need to budget time to maintain a good web site. If it's not current, a customer will zip away with a click of the mouse.

If you're interested in investigating the potential of mail or Internet marketing, keep in mind:

- The proliferation of web sites can make navigating the Internet difficult. Make sure your customers know how to find you.



- Link your page to web sites that strive to connect farmers and consumers, such as www.localfarm.net, www.upick.com and www.smallfarms.com
- Update your catalog or web site often with new product information and uses.
- Make sure the site is secure for credit-card users, and provide regular and toll-free telephone numbers for customers who prefer to call in orders
- Find reliable and cost-effective shippers who will deliver products on time in good condition.

For more information about Internet marketing, see Resources, p. 20.

New Paths for Commodities

DIRECT MARKETING MEAT AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS

Decades ago, most meat and animal products were sold directly to customers, but all that changed with the advent of the modern feedlot-to-wholesale system. Recently, consumer concerns about food safety and animal welfare have spurred renewed interest in buying directly from the source. Producers, meanwhile, see the value of re-connecting to consumers.

For farmers facing an increasingly concentrated market with a few large processors controlling prices, direct marketing offers the opportunity to retain a greater share of product value. Marketing meat and animal products, however, means making food safety issues paramount.

Meat producers address consumer safety concerns through inspection. Before launching a direct meat-selling venture, decide where and how you want to market your meat. With the exception of poultry, the type of inspection you choose limits where the meat can be sold. Then, identify a processor to meet your needs.

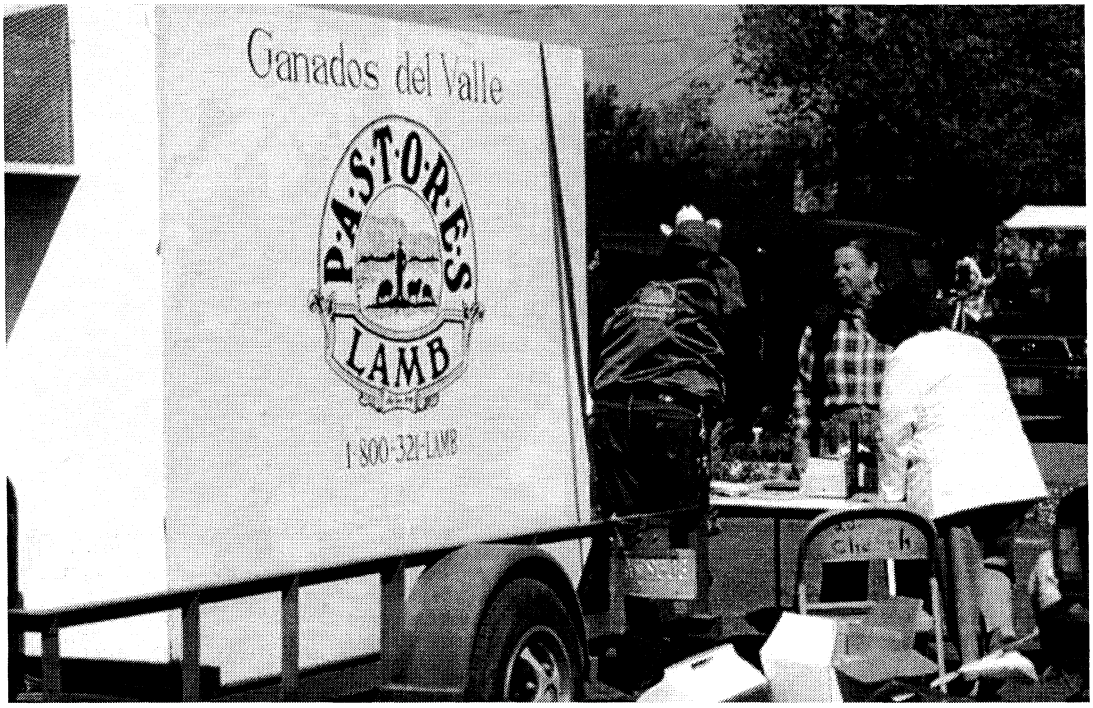
Meat producers can choose from three processing options: in a federally inspected facility, which checks meat that can then be sold anywhere in the U.S. as long as labeling requirements are met; in a state-inspected facility, which certifies meat that can only be sold in that state; and custom processing at a local meat locker.

Custom processing exemptions usually allow you to pre-sell parts of the live animal, then process and deliver the meat without being subject to inspection. Most states, however, attach special conditions, which vary widely.

Small poultry producers may be exempt from some federal and state inspection regulations, depending on

THIS PAGE: GANADOS DEL VALLE, A NONPROFIT GROUP IN LOSOJOS, N.M., MARKETS WOOLEN PRODUCTS AND LAMB FROM LOCAL FARMERS. PASTORES LAMB, A DIVISION OF GANADOS DEL VALLE, SELLS OUT EVERY SATURDAY AT THE SANTA FE FARMERS MARKET. PHOTO BY JERRY DEWITT

OPPOSITE: MARTHA AND EARNIE BOHNER STARTED WITH 80 ACRES AND SOME BIG IDEAS. TODAY, WITH THE HELP OF SOUND BUSINESS PLANNING, THEY RUN A SUCCESSFUL PICK-YOUR-OWN FARM AND THRIVING BUSINESS CENTERED ON VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN LAMPE, MO. PHOTO BY MARTHA BOHNER



the number of birds marketed annually. Egg sales are also subject to exemptions. Contact the American Pastured Poultry Producers Association for more information. (See Resources, p. 19)

Dairy products are usually heavily regulated by state officials. Check with your state Department of Agriculture.

For more information about meat inspection regulations, see the newly published *Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing*. Using a SARE grant, author Neil Hamilton answers common questions about laws on marketing meat — and other products — directly to consumers. (See Resources, p. 20.)

Educate yourself about processing. Learning about the various cuts of meat and approximate yields from a carcass will help when dealing with both the butcher and your customers. Food science departments at most universities can offer invaluable information.

Develop a relationship with your butcher to get your animals processed the way you want and to ensure that the meat is hung to age for an appropriate amount of time.

With less volume, small producers will want to market quarter, half or whole carcasses rather than specific cuts. Be prepared to tell customers how many steaks, roasts and other cuts they can expect from a half or whole carcass. Certain cuts are more popular than others, particularly the hind portions. It may be necessary to sell "split halves" which include equal portions of both front and hind, to avoid filling a freezer or meat locker with unsalable meat. Freezer meat that is sold by the cut will have to be inspected.

You may want to develop labels describing how you produce your meat, such as without drugs, organic or grass-fed. Check with USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) at www.fsis.usda.gov or (202) 205-0623.

Provide cooking instructions, especially for grass-fed meats, which require much less cooking time than conventionally produced meat. Many people today are unfamiliar with how to cook items such as roasts. Let them know how simple it is, and you may find it easier to move some of those larger cuts. If possible, provide samples. With a quality product, sampling can be the most effective form of marketing.

Herman Beck-Chenoweth, who has direct-marketed meat and eggs for years, co-owns the first farm in Ohio to market fresh meat at an outdoor farmers market. An avid marketer, Beck-Chenoweth sells meat, eggs and vegetables to two restaurants, through a CSA operation and at farmers markets under his Locust Grove Farm label.

"We prefer to tell customers exactly what we do to our products," he says. "We tell people that we kill the chicken using the kosher method. We tell them what the chickens eat, and how old they are."

At the farmers market, Beck-Chenoweth takes care to create an attractive display: a folding table, umbrella, and fiberglass trays with ice and a clear cover to display fresh chickens packaged in plastic bags.

Jim Goodman of Wonewoc, Wis., began selling organic beef directly not only to increase profits, but also to talk with his customers. After 16 years of selling to packing companies, Goodman now brings beef to three restaurants, a farmers market and directly to friends and neighbors.

"Traditionally, farmers never see their customers," says Goodman, who regularly drives 75 miles to Madison to deliver beef. "It's nice to be able to hand your customers a package of burgers with tips on how to cook it and be able to tell them how the animals are raised."

When he takes a 1,500-pound steer to the packing plant, he receives about $800. That same animal brings $2,000, minus about $400 in processing costs, when he sells it directly. Selling meat himself means more time on the road, including waking at 3:30 a.m. on farmers market days, but Goodman is gratified that he now sells one or two animals a month through his own carefully cultivated channels.

"People are willing to pay more for direct-marketed organic beef," he says. "Once you get regular customers, you develop a friendship with them. Then people start talking about buying meat from 'my farmer.'"

ADDING VALUE THROUGH PROCESSING

It was 1986 when Earnie and Martha Bohner began making jam in rented facilities near their farm in southern Missouri. Since then, Persimmon Hill Berry Farm has built its own processing kitchen for value-added products. To create special treats that would appeal to customers, the Bohners worked with a chef to perfect recipes for jams, shiitake mushroom sauce, dried shiitakes and barbecue sauce. Today their value-added foodstuffs account for 50 percent of the farm's gross income.

"From the first, we were committed to quality, and quality entails a lot of time and cost," says Martha Bohner. "Our jam recipe is simple: fresh, ripe fruit; sugar; natural pectin; a bit of lemon juice—and nothing else. We want our product to have a distinctive, berry taste."

Processing fruits and shiitake mushrooms allows the Bohners to use produce "seconds," extend the marketing season and diversify their marketing outlets.

The notion of adding value to crops to improve profitability is not limited to horticultural ventures. A team of grain producers launched a value-adding food business for organic oat farmers in Vermont.

The fledgling Vermont Cereal Co. was paying high transportation costs to process food-grade rolled oats in Ontario, Canada. A SARE producer grant paid part of an engineering consultant's fee to design a local production line in Cabot, Vt., cutting processing expenses in half.

Company co-founder Andrew Leinoff banked on a product that would impress a growing health-conscious market. After a family member designed the logo, Eric and Andy's Home Grown Rolled Oats was off and running.

"We wanted to tell people that the oats are home grown," Leinoff says. "We think our buyers really respond to our label."

The oats are sold through distributors to food co-ops, health food stores, specialty stores and mail order catalogs. In addition, the partners do demos at stores that carry their product. Not only do demos promote the product, but they also offer a great way to get customer feedback and recommendations about taste, texture and appearance.

In one three-hour demo, they sold six cases of oats, which are packaged in cotton muslin bags, ziplock plastic bags and 50-pound bulk bags, depending on customer needs. The "Oat Tote" offers 10 pounds of rolled oats sewn into a sturdy tote bag.

Value-added opportunities abound. Examine your product and brainstorm about how processing it might increase its value. Fruit growers can dry their product or make wines, juices, vinegars, spreads, sauces, syrups and preserves. Grain growers might create cereals and baking mixes. Dairy operators can bottle milk or make cheese, while livestock producers might sell dried meat or specialty cuts.

When you add variety to your product line, you increase the choices presented to your customers and your chances for expanding your sales volume.

Provide cooking instructions, especially for grass-fed meats, which require much less cooking time than conventionally produced meat.

Attracting consumers to remote areas may require communities to work together to develop tourism.

ALTERNATIVE MARKETING FOR COMMODITIES GROWN IN REMOTE LOCATIONS

While farmers located near population centers have a variety of opportunities to connect with consumers, farmers in very rural areas have to be more creative. Those in remote locations, usually producing grains, oilseeds and livestock products, face special marketing challenges. Yet, changing tastes and an increasingly "wired" world offer new options.

Diversification. One of the keys to broadening marketing strategies is diversification. Diversifying your operation can increase your returns and spread risk. Today's consumer-driven market offers new opportunities for marketing a wide variety of products tailored to the end user's needs. Consider growing edible soybeans, high-value horticultural crops or organic beef. Or branch out: New technology is creating a growing market for non-food, non-feed uses of agricultural products and byproducts, many based on nontraditional crops.

While some alternative crops are grown almost exclusively under a contract arrangement, many do not have well-established markets. Be certain you can sell a crop before planting it. For more information, see SAN's "Diversify Crops for Profits and Stewardship" at www.sare.org/san/htdocs/pubs/.

Adding Value. While adding value through processing can be profitable for face-to-face marketing, it can be even more valuable to farmers who market at a distance. Dean and Hope Folkvord of Three Forks, Mont., found that conservation tillage and recycling not only protect natural resources, but also increase profits.

Starting with small sales of specialty grain to a few regional bakeries, the Folkvords have transformed their wheat farm into Wheat Montana, selling packaged raw grain and grain mixes, flours and bakery goods. Wheat Montana products are marketed on-farm, through stores in five states and on the Internet, bringing in $3.5 million a year. The Folkvords tell their story on their web page, www.wheatmontana.com.

"Until the early 1980s, the Folkvords would sell their grain to distant markets as other wheat farms do, but they were getting hammered by price fluctuation as they watched most of the other farms in the area discontinued. Rather than getting slowly sucked under, they decided to make changes. 'We looked for a way to make lemonade out of lemons. We can't grow a lot of wheat but we can grow high quality milling wheat—the best milling wheat in the country,' Dean Folkvord says.

"They diversified their operations and added value to their farm by focusing on their strengths. It now includes a bakery with their own brand-name bread and a thriving business selling their high-protein grain to 110 specialty breadmakers around the country. 'Our farm now generates 10 times the gross income it did when we shipped grain as a Plain Jane wheat farm,' Folkvord says."

A key to their success lies in their bread bag recycling program, where customers receive a free loaf of bread with every 13 bags returned. The program has helped Wheat Montana build an identity and inspired interest from a very diverse group of consumers.

Mail Order and Internet Marketing. Mail order and the Internet offer farmers new ways to form long-distance relationships with consumers. Newsletters, catalogs and web sites offer customers a personal introduction to the farmer and the farm. They tell, in words and with pictures, about your operation and the community as well as the product. Consumers can learn about the issues facing sustainable farmers today and how to support efforts to protect the environment.

The Internet is also a great way to research potential markets or connect farmers in remote areas with buyers all over the nation and even overseas. Web sites such as Kansas National Farm Organization's www.tri.net/farmnet/markets offer databases for producers and buyers of specialty grains to connect.

Maggie Julseth Howe of Prairieland Herbs (www.radiks.net/~mhowe/) relies on Internet marketing to expand sales of herb and body products beyond her small Iowa town. Not only does the web site offer an easy way for people to re-order their favorite products, but it offers her small shop a more cosmopolitan cachet.

"Many people are excited to hear we have a web page—I think it lends us credibility," she says. "I can keep it more up to date than our print catalog—it's a lot easier to change a web page than a print catalog!—and use the web site to show color pictures of our products. As our catalog business grows, the web site will grow to be more of an asset."

Do not rule out agritourism even if you own a farm in a remote location, especially if some other basis for tourism, such as parks or historical sites, already exists. Harvest festivals, dude ranches, fee hunting, and bed and breakfast operations all integrate well with wider regional efforts.

Attracting consumers to remote areas may require communities to work together to develop tourism. Local farmers could band together to offer a wide variety of farm products and agri-entertainment activities, based on unique local attributes.

Evaluating New Farm Enterprises

GOALS AND VALUES

Before undertaking new farm enterprises or making major changes to an existing business, set some well-defined farm goals. Those goals should go beyond profit objectives to include available resources as well as personal and family values.

"When asking for assistance with farm planning, people always ask 'What should I grow? What market should I be using?' " says Mike Hogan of the Ohio State University Extension Service. "They should take a step back and ask: 'Why do we want to buy a farm? Why do we want to grow this crop?' "

Hogan works with farm families to develop a mission statement and goals based on their core values as part of a whole-farm planning process. With SARE funds, Hogan and Ohio State's sustainable agriculture teams have developed an information packet helping individuals and families set personal goals. (See Resources, p. 20)

"Financial returns generally are not at the top of reasons why people want to farm," Hogan says. Rather, the quality of life available on a farm, independence, environmental stewardship and spending time with the family often lead people back to the land.

EVALUATING YOUR RESOURCES

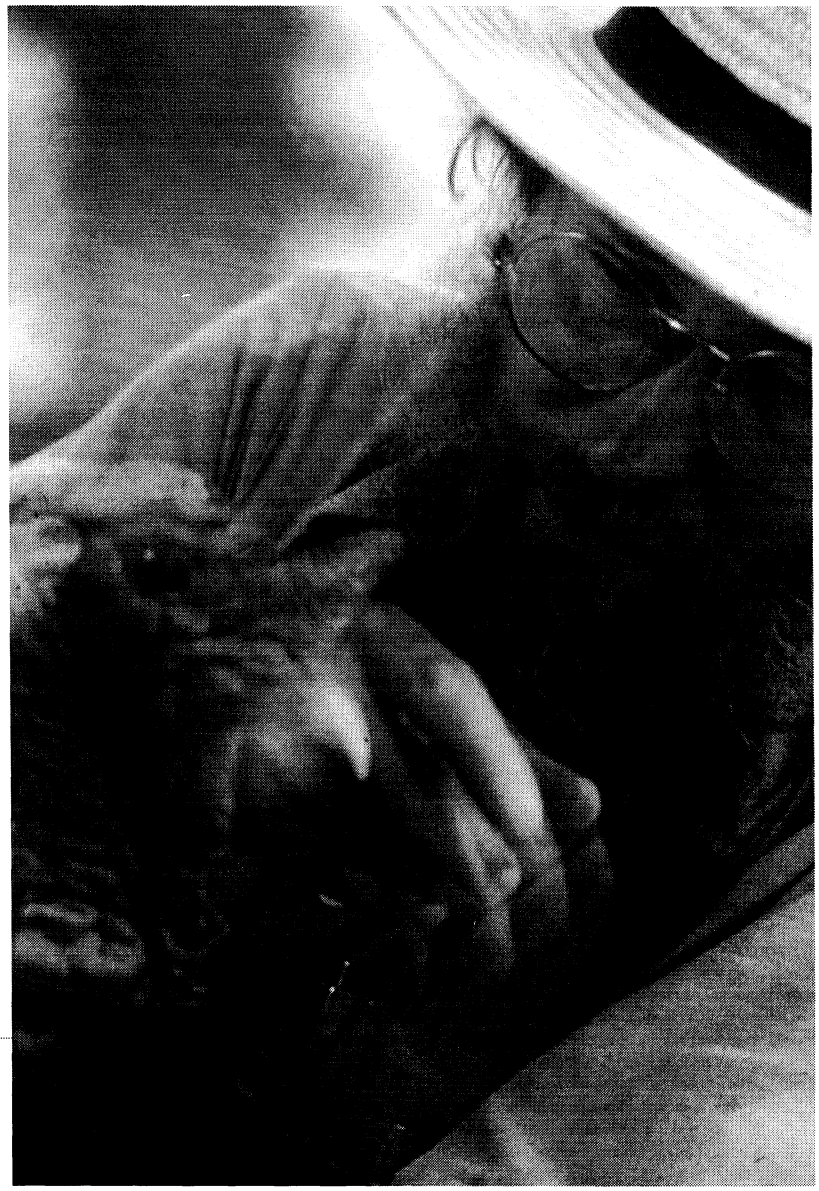
New marketing strategies can help enhance farm profitability, but you need to identify methods that will help you reach your specific goals. To achieve them, it helps to base decisions about new farm enterprises on existing resources.

Individual and family strengths and weaknesses. You and your family will have to decide how you feel about taking on the extra work, time and risk involved in direct marketing. Who will be involved in the new enterprise and how can various tasks reflect each person's abilities and interests? Some family members may be highly skilled in production or record-keeping, for example, but not enjoy dealing with people. Identifying someone who can build relationships with customers is crucial to successful direct marketing.

Natural resources. Think about what resources you have and how to use them in a new enterprise. Consider your acreage, the quality of the land, and current and possible land uses as well as water, woodlands and wildlife habitat.

On-farm infrastructure. Buildings and machinery are important resources to consider. You might turn existing buildings into on-farm stores or packing sheds. Possibilities for using machinery and other equipment may be limited by condition, size or other features, so take those into account as you mull over alternatives.

Byproducts. Culls or seconds from a produce enterprise might be turned into processed foods like jams, fruit roll-ups, dried foods and more. Byproducts from livestock slaughter could be turned into pet food. Get creative—some farmers are marketing buckwheat hulls as pillow stuffing!



HERMAN BECK-CHENOWETH AND HIS WIFE, LINDA LEE, HAVE RAISED POULTRY ON PASTURE SINCE 1991. A SARE GRANT ALLOWS THEM TO TEACH FARMERS AND OTHER AG PROFESSIONALS HOW TO PRODUCE AND MARKET FREE-RANGE POULTRY. PHOTO BY JEFF FRIEDMAN

Labor resources. Cost and availability of both on- and off-farm labor play a part in evaluating your options. If labor is limited to the farm family, your choices should be based on how much the family is willing and able to contribute. If you plan to hire others, a nearby town with a school or university might provide a pool of workers available in the busy summer season.

Off-farm infrastructure. Off-farm infrastructure includes a variety of important resources including local processing and storage facilities, potential markets and market outlets, paved roads and high-speed Internet connections.

Financial resources—cash, savings and credit. Your choice of enterprises will depend on the availability of investment funds, as well as your family's ability to risk losing those funds. While it is possible to minimize financial risk through careful planning, there is no way to guarantee your new enterprise will succeed. Even thriving enterprises usually take time to begin showing a profit, and that time will be increased if debt service is added to other operating costs. If research shows a particular venture will require substantial credit or loans, consider other enterprises.

CREATING A BUSINESS PLAN

If new goals are your destination and the resource base is your means of getting there, a business plan serves as a kind of road map. A business plan sets objectives and priorities, providing a format for regular review and course corrections. Useful business plans contain concrete programs to achieve specific, measurable objectives, assign tasks to appropriate people, and set milestones and deadlines for tracking implementation.

Begin by developing a mission statement, critical factors, market analysis and break-even analysis. This kind of plan won't tell you how to run your business, but it can indicate whether an enterprise is worth pursuing. Try the following:

- Write a mission statement that addresses why your business should exist, who your customers will be and how the business will benefit them.
- Determine what factors are critical for the enterprise to survive and whether those requirements can be met. Adequate parking, hours or seasons of operation and location of market outlets are all examples of critical factors.
- Conduct a simple market analysis. Define what characteristics make someone a potential customer and think about where those customers are shopping now. Estimate how many customers you may have and how many you will need. Simply observing traffic flows and the types of products people buy at farmers markets or specialty stores, and attending

ELEMENTS OF A BUSINESS PLAN

A full business plan includes a standard set of five main parts.

1. **Business Description**
2. **Marketing Plan**
3. **Production Plan**
4. **Human Resources Description**
5. **Financial Plan**

Anyone planning a new business should consider a holistic management course or publication. **See p. 19.**

Many software packages will help you write business and marketing plans. As you begin to think about new enterprises, try organizing notes, ideas, catalogs and other information in a divided notebook.

If the plan indicates outside financing is required, your report can demonstrate credit worthiness to the lender. Bankers want borrowers who have a clear vision of where they are going and how they will get there. Be aware that direct marketing and specialty products may be new areas for the lenders, who may need some background to fully understand the plan. The plan must show ways to pay back any necessary loans and alternative plans with and without outside financing. A business that relies on continual injections of funds from the outside will not be sustainable for long.

farm tours or farm-related community events can provide needed information about who your customers might be and ways to target them. "Find out how the market works," advises Herman Beck-Chenoweth, who direct-markets poultry and vegetables in Ohio. "Research a farmers market to learn what sells and for how much. You don't want to take 40 dozen eggs hoping to sell them at $2 a dozen when someone else is already selling eggs for 50 cents a dozen."

- Analyze basic break-even scenarios. Project sales volumes and prices, and complete a preliminary production plan to figure out the costs of producing the goods. Knowing the costs of production will tell you whether prevailing market prices will cover those costs. Many direct marketers set their prices too low. Prices should be based on what the market will pay to ensure a reasonable return over the costs of production.
- Assess how many units of sales are needed to cover costs. Be realistic: Add up costs for rent, advertising and other overhead, figure out how much money you'll make for every unit you sell after its specific costs of production and calculate how many units you need to break even. Estimating profitability under best, expected and worst-case scenarios for yield or sales, costs and prices can provide a better feel for the risks. While higher-risk activities tend to generate the highest profits, you will have to decide how much risk you are willing to accept.

Once you digest this information, the potential viability of the enterprise should be apparent. If it seems worth pursuing, the creation of a full-fledged business plan is warranted.

CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH

Failure to judge the true demand for a product is a common cause of failure in many business ventures. To improve your odds, thoroughly research your ideas.

Market research includes ferreting out potential business, competition and consumer trends. Good research also entails finding out as much information as possible about your planned products or services.

Gather information on demographics, consumption, and current and future trends from libraries, government agencies, chambers of commerce, universities and trade publications.

Pinpoint trends that would most likely affect your enterprise, such as customer preference toward specialty shops, existence of local direct marketing associations, attendance and sales figures for farmers markets, popularity of farm tours for school and senior groups, and so on. Local and regional sustainable farming and direct marketing associations are also good sources of advice.

Collecting data yourself can help fill the gaps. You may want to do the following:

- Talk to other farmers. Ask them what kinds of buyers they attract, what kinds of service they offer and how they promote their products. Most small-scale farmers are happy to offer such information. Visit market outlets at different times to see what they have to offer.
- Evaluate marketing methods and consider new approaches that put a new twist on an existing product. Not only might you produce homemade jam, but you also could offer it in cases. Hook up with community centers or jam-making groups, or offer to teach the old art of canning.
- Design surveys to find out about customers' buying habits and preferences, and whether there is a need that you can fill. Personal interviews are time-consuming but will yield valuable information.

Failure to judge the true demand for a product is a common cause of failure in many business ventures. To improve your odds, thoroughly research your ideas.

Combined with samples or other promotional materials, surveying doubles as advertising. Be careful when you interpret the responses. What people say about how they spend their money is often very different from what they actually do. You want to get a realistic idea of whether people will in fact spend money on your product.

- Talk to store owners to assess your potential to sell your product. Compare stores to determine which ones best meet your strategies and needs.

Investigate as many marketing options as possible and identify several that look promising. The more ways and places you have to sell your product, the better your chances of success.

Using the results of your market research, you can target the customers or businesses you want to attract and pinpoint your strategy. Estimate the number of customers in your target market and how often they buy similar products. Your target market may already be satisfied by the competition, and you will need to rethink your strategy.

Promotion and customer relations must be part of your marketing plan. A common rule of thumb for promotional expenses is 3 percent of projected sales. Some ideas:

- Network, then rely on word of mouth.
- Make attractive, eye-catching signs for your displays, to direct traffic, to advertise your stand, etc.
- Offer promotional items and don't be shy about passing them out to interested visitors.
- Advertise in local or state guides to organic foods. Contact your county extension agent or selected state Departments of Agriculture for suggestions.
- Offer school and other group tours of your farm or facilities. Contact schools to encourage visits and tours.
- Conduct cooking demonstrations.
- Offer samples (if health laws allow), at farmers markets and stores.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIRECT MARKETERS

Marketing activities are guided by a wide variety of laws and regulations at federal, state, county and city levels. Some regulations vary by type of enterprise and location, while others are more general. Legal considerations include the type of business ownership (sole proprietorship, partnership, etc), zoning ordinances,

small business licenses, building codes and permits, weights and measures, federal and state business tax issues, sanitation permits and inspections, food processors' permits and others. See *Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing*, p. 20.

If you plan to employ workers, you must meet more requirements, such as acquiring an employer tax identification from the IRS and getting state workmen's compensation insurance. Environmental laws also are becoming increasingly important to farmers.

Adequate insurance coverage is essential. Every operator should have liability insurance for your product and your premises, employer's liability insurance to protect you if employees are injured, and damage insurance to protect against loss to buildings, merchandise and other property. General comprehensive farm liability insurance often does not cover on-farm marketing operations such as agri-tourism businesses. Check with your local insurance agent about liability and loss insurance specifically designed for direct-market farmers.

EXECUTING THE PLAN

The best-laid plans go to waste without good management. Track actual spending and sales, then compare the results against the plan projections—a technique called variance analysis. Once you have the variance, follow up with course corrections, new plans, revisions and more follow-up.

Holistic Management begins with the assumption that every plan is "wrong"—a safe bet when you consider future weather, capricious markets and other unforeseeable factors. Managers engage in a repeating cycle of planning, monitoring and re-planning that adjusts the course of the business as circumstances change.

Earnie Bohner of Persimmon Hill Berry Farm in southern Missouri recognizes the road-map value of a plan. Every year, he reviews production and marketing records and adjusts his long-range plan. He sets goals for the next 12 months, then breaks down jobs by two-week periods. "In an ideal situation, I would look at these goals monthly," Bohner says. "Every day I carry a list of jobs that supports the overall plan."

Resources

GENERAL INFORMATION

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), PO Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702, (800) 346-9140; www.attra.org. Provides assistance, publications and resources free of charge to farmers, Extension educators and other ag professionals. Ask for "Adding Value to Farm Products: An Overview," and "Fresh to Processed: Adding Value for Specialty Markets."

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Stop 2223, Washington, D.C. 20250-2223, (202) 720-5203, www.sare.org. Administered by USDA-CSREES, SARE studies and spreads information about sustainable agriculture via a nationwide grants program.

Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), Hills Building, Room 10, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0082; www.sare.org/san/htdocs/pubs. As SARE's national outreach arm, SAN disseminates information through electronic and print publications. Call (802) 656-0471 or email nesare@zoo.umv.edu for questions about bulk discounts or rush orders.

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA), 62 White Loaf Road, Southampton, MA 01073, (413) 529-0386 or (888) 884-9270; www.nafdma.com

American Pastured Poultry Producers Association publishes a quarterly newsletter about production practices, processing equipment, marketing, legal issues and more. A database networks producers and customers. Membership is $20. APPPA, 5207 70th Street, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729, (715) 723-2293; dkaufman@discover-net.net

Office of Commodity Development and Promotion, 1688 W. Adams, Phoenix, AZ 85007; http://ag.arizona.edu/AREC/dmkt/tabcontents.html

BUSINESS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Allan Savory Center for Holistic Management. A network that exchanges information about HM. (505) 842-5252; www.holisticmanagement.org

NxLeveL. The Agricultural Entrepreneurs Program module is a SARE-funded project offering training and materials for farmers seeking marketing opportunities. (800) 873-9378, www.nxlevel.org

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), 409 Third St., SW, 4th floor, Washington, DC 20024. Call (800) 8ASK-SBA for SCORE office near you.

USDA Rural Business Cooperative Services. Helps cooperatives learn to market and distribute agricultural

Resources *continued*

products. (202) 720-7558; www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/csdir.htm

Whole Farm Planning Resource Packet: Mike Hogan, Ohio State Extension Sustainable Agriculture Team, (330) 627-4310

WEB SITES

Agricultural Direct Marketing E-mail Discussion Group, direct-mkt@reeusda.gov Information about agricultural direct marketing. Send "subscribe direct-mkt" as a message to majordomo@reeusda.gov, with the subject line empty.

Agricultural Marketing Service Farmers Market Directory. Lists hundreds of farmers markets across the country. www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm or (202) 700-8317

Alternative Farming Systems' Information Center. CSA Resources for farmers & consumers. www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa or (301) 504-6449; afsic@nal.usda.gov

Farmer/Consumer links www.localfarm.net and www.smallfarms.com link farmers and consumers

Internet Marketing Center. Offers marketing tips and strategies, research resources, a free monthly newsletter and more. www.marketingtips.com/index.html

Sustainable Farming Connection, http://metalab.unc.edu/farming-connection . Offers a forum for farmers to find and share information, including a diverse collection of resources and links about marketing. See "Net Marketing: How Farmers are Using the Internet to Reach and Satisfy Customers."

BOOKS, PERIODICALS AND VIDEOS

Direct Farm Marketing and Tourism Handbook, by the Arizona Department of Agriculture. A comprehensive overview of direct marketing options, available at http://ag.arizona.edu/lc/pubs/dmkt/dmkt.html

Direct Marketing of Farm Produce and Home Goods, by John Cottingham, et.al. (A3062). Available from Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publications. Free. (608) 262-3346

The Direct Marketing Resource Notebook by Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society. Includes case studies of different direct marketing enterprises, Midwestern state and federal marketing contacts and an extensive resources section. $20. (402) 254-2289

Dynamic Farmers Marketing: A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products, by Jeff Ishee. Covers the best ways for farmers to display their products and themselves, the best items to sell and how to interact with customers. $16.95. Bittersweet Farmstead. (540) 886-8477.

"Farmers and their Diversified Horticultural Marketing Strategies," by the Center for Sustainable Agriculture. 50-minute video, $15. (802) 656-5459 or susagctr@zoo.uvm.edu.

Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises. $11.50, NRAES-Northeast Regional Ag Engineering Service, (607) 255-7654 or nraes@cornell.edu. Catalog includes relevant titles such as *Facilities for Roadside Markets,* $7, and *Produce Handling for Direct Marketing,* $7 at http://rcwpsun.cas.psu.edu/NRAES

Food Consumption, Prices, and Expenditures, 1970–97 by Judith Jones Putnam and Jane E. Allshouse. Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. (No.965) Describes U. S. consumer purchasing habits from 1970 to 1997. Free. (800) 999-6779; www.econ.ag.gov/epubs/pdf/sb965/index.htm

Free Range Poultry Production and Marketing, by Herman Beck-Chenoweth. A guide to raising, processing and marketing chicken, turkey and eggs. $29.50. (740) 596-4379

Growing for Market newsletter, published by Lynn Byczynski. $27/yr. (800) 307-8949. *Marketing Your Produce: Ideas for Small-Scale Farmers* is a collection of GFM's best articles. $20 + $3 s/h.

Internet Marketing for Farmers (FS 510) by Washington State University Cooperative Extension, King County. Free. (206) 296-3900

The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing, by Neil Hamilton. Offers tips about legal issues to consider when direct-marketing farm products. $20. Agricultural Law Center, Drake University, Des Moines, IA 50311. (515) 271-2947.

Making it on the Farm: Increasing Sustainability Through Value-added Processing and Marketing, by Southern SAWG. Includes interviews with Southern farmers and ranchers who are adding value to their products, describes some of their practices and includes a list of resources. $12. (501) 292-3714.

Marketing for Success: Creative Marketing Tools for the Agricultural Industry, by Robert Matarazzo, Doe Hollow Publishing, rjm@interactive.net or (908) 475-4460.

Pastured Poultry Profits, by Joel Salatin. This how-manual offers information about relationship marketing for poultry. $30. ACRES USA. (800) 355-5313.

Salad Bar Beef, by Joel Salatin. This guide explores marketing beef in addition to production methods to rasie superior beef on pasture. $30. ACRES USA. (800) 355-5313

Sell What You Sow! The Grower's Guide to Successful Produce Marketing, by Eric Gibson. This 304-page book specifies strategies from master marketers around the country. $22.50. New World Publishing, (530) 622-2248.

Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture, by Elizabeth Henderson with Robyn Van En. Lays out the basic tenets of CSA for farmers and consumers. $24.95. Chelsea Green Publishing, (800) 639-4099; www.chelseagreen.com

Small Farm Today magazine. Six times/year for $21. (800) 633-2535.

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Reap New Profits: Marketing Strategies for Farmers & Ranchers
A PowerPoint Presentation for Educators

1 – Title image: Collage of marketing strategy images

Presenter: For a small or medium-sized farm operation, innovative marketing strategies may mean the difference between a profitable, successful enterprise and closing the farm gate forever. Alternative marketing strategies have become an important way for small and medium-sized farms and ranches to prosper. Rather than accepting prices offered by wholesalers, direct marketers gain the power to turn a profit back in their own hands.

2 – Text image:
- Farmers markets
- Pick-your-own farms
- Farm stands/Value-added products
- Entertainment farming/Agri-tourism

Presenter: We will lay out some of the more successful alternative farm marketing strategies. You will probably pick up several ideas from the successes of others.

3 – Text image:
- Community supported agriculture (CSA)
- Cooperatives
- Restaurant sales
- Mail order/Internet
- Direct marketing meat

Presenter: Farmers markets, farm stands, agritourism, community supported agriculture and adding value to farm products offer producers direct connections to their customers and allow them to sell a "farm experience" as well as their goods.

4 – Text image: Knowledge of production without effective marketing usually will not bring a rewarding return.

Presenter: Coming up with a great idea is just the beginning. You still need to research your proposed enterprise using sound business planning and decide whether it makes sense for you and your family. Use this accompanying bulletin from the Sustainable Agriculture Network for additional ideas and a list of helpful resources.

5 – Text image:
- Great idea
- Planning
- Implementing
- Evaluating/Refining

6 – Title image: Farmers markets

Presenter: Farmers markets may be the most common direct-marketing strategy. According to USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, the number of farmers markets in this country jumped from 2,410 to 2,746 in just two years.

7 – Text/Photo image: Farmers market photo with "1996 – 2,410 markets; 1998 - 2,746" super-imposed.

Presenter: That increase in farmers markets reflects an increasing preference for farm-fresh produce. This most popular form of direct marketing perhaps has done more than any other strategy to increase support for farmers and farming. Many customers prefer to buy produce from farmers they know and trust, especially the small family farms that help support communities.

8 – Text image: Maine farmers market customers say supporting local farmers was their second reason for shopping there, behind product quality. Source: University of Calif. Small Farm Program.

9 – Farmers market photo

Presenter: Farmers markets usually offer a secure, regular and flexible outlet where a vendor can sell a wide range of fresh produce, plants, value-added farm products and crafts. Beginning direct-marketers may want to start with farmers markets.

10 – Farmers market photo

11 – Text image: *Dynamic Farmers' Marketing: A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products* by farmer Jeff Ishee

12 – Text image: Market tips
- Colorful, layered displays of your products are enhanced by signs, packaging, even the clothes you wear.
- Price in round numbers to speed sales and eliminate problems making change.

- Don't deliberately or drastically undersell your fellow farmers.

13 – Text image: To locate farmers markets in your area, go to www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.html, or call USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service at (202) 720-8317.

14 – Title image: Pick-your-own

Presenter: Pick-your-own marketing turns the job of harvesting, packing and transporting to the customer. While it can be a good way to offset labor costs, many farmers find it most profitable when paired with an on-farm tourism activity.

15 - Photo: Pick-your-own

16 – Text/photo slide: "People don't come all the way out here to get cheap food. They come because it's fun and the berries are absolutely fresh."
Earnie Bohner
Persimmon Hill Berry Farm

Presenter: The popularity of pick-your-own farming has declined since the 1970s and 1980s, but it remains a great marketing option for small growers with a good client base — especially those located on the edge of urban areas. Pick-your-own reduces harvest labor needs and eliminates most post-harvest tasks such as grading, washing, packing, cooling and storing.

17 – Text image: Producers considering pick-your-own need will need:
- liability insurance
- space for parking
- ability to supervise customers
- a willingness to host the public

18 - Photo/text image:
The success of pick-your-own marketing is often in the details, such as:
• Having an answering machine message listing prices, conditions and operating hours
• Maintaining evening and weekend hours
• Creating a pleasant setting for families

19 - Title slide: Farm stands

Presenter: Producers opening stands on site can sell freshly harvested produce that does not need to be trucked beyond the farm gate. Key to supporting such a venture is a location along a busy road, with good, attractive signage.

20 - Photo: Farm stand sign

Presenter: A good farm stand also functions as a place to display and sell value-added products. Producers should examine their products and brainstorm about how processing might increase their value.

21 – Photo: Value-added product

Presenter: Fruit growers can dry their product or make wines, juice, vinegar, spreads, sauces, syrups and preserves. Grain growers might want to create cereals and baking mixes. Dairy operators can bottle milk or create homegrown cheese, while livestock producers might sell dried meat or specialty cuts.

22 – Photo: Value-added product

23 – Text image:
- Feature high-demand items, such as fresh-picked sweet corn
- Pick locations on or near busy roads
- Contact your local extension agent for more information about setting up a stand
- Familiarize yourself with regulations governing food products

Presenter:
Local extension offices should have information about how to construct sales stands, small market buildings, and produce displays.

24 – Title image: Entertainment farming

Presenter: Pairing farms with entertainment can draw families — and their recreational dollars. Seasonal festivals, hayrides, petting zoos, on-farm classes and workshops bring more potential customers to the farm. Another option for recreational farming is leasing wooded land or marginal cropland for hunting, fishing or hiking.

25 – Photo: Agritourism

Presenter: Social skills and a scenic, clean, attractive farm are crucial for success in agritourism and can overcome a location that is less than ideal.

26 - Photo: Agritourism

27 – Photo/text image: State tourism bureaus can offer a wealth of ideas and information. Increasingly, county and state economic development boards offer expertise and/or publicity.

28 – Text image:

- Producers will need good "people" skills
- Tourism offices can help bring customers
- Link to the state Department of Agriculture for help with farm festivals, etc.

29 – Title slide: Community-Supported Agriculture

Presenter: Community supported agriculture (CSA) is still new to most people. But since it began in the U.S. in the late 1980s, it has grown tremendously as farmers and consumers have seen the many advantages to this unique partnership.

30 – Photo: CSA

Presenter: CSA is an organized form of subscription marketing in which consumers pay up front in the beginning of the growing season in exchange for weekly supplies of fresh produce. By paying in advance, they become members of the farm who share in many of the risks of farming, but also share the bounty.

31 – Photo: CSA

Presenter: Many CSA farms offer members opportunities to volunteer at the farm. This not only lowers costs, but also allows members to learn more about what it really means to grow food. No two CSA farms are alike. Some supply such items as flowers, berries, eggs, meat or honey in addition to standard produce.

32 – Photo: CSA

33 – Photo/text image: "We want our customers to be more sensitive to the farm situation. The more they understand the connection of family farms to healthy communities, the better for us and farmers everywhere."
-- Molly Bartlett, CSA farmer, Hiram, Ohio.

34 – Text image: When evaluating community supported agriculture consider:

- Proximity to customers
- Ability to host members
- Willingness to sponsor farm events
- Variety of products
- Ability to distribute produce

Presenter: Farmers may ask members to come to the farm to pick up their shares, or they might deliver them to centrally located distribution sites. Many CSA farmers produce weekly or biweekly newsletters describing the anticipated harvest and featuring recipe ideas. Others reach out through listservs or websites.

35 - Title slide: Cooperative Marketing

Presenter: Some direct marketers go it alone, but many find that profitability comes through working with others. Through a cooperative, producers share marketing expenses and risks and negotiate with buyers as a team. Co-ops create all sorts of new opportunities, from diversifying products to reaching new markets.

36 - Photo: Co-op

37 - Photo: Co-op

Presenter: Perhaps the most attractive aspect of joining a co-op is the ability of a group to diminish financial risks for individuals.

38 - Photo: Co-op product

Presenter: With start-up help from a SARE grant, the farmer-owned Vermont Quality Meats marketing cooperative is netting top dollar for its products and providing 52 member farms with crucial income.

39 – Text image: Vermont Quality Meats marketing cooperative has put $100,000 to $150,000 extra profit into the collective pockets of its member producers in less than a year.

40 – Text image: "Instead of throwing our product away at the auction and supporting a bunch of middlemen, we're doing all those steps ourselves."
Lydia Ratcliff
Founder, Vermont Quality Meats

41 – Text image: To set up a marketing cooperative…

Presenter: The USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Services agency offers information and assistance in setting up and managing a cooperative marketing effort, as does the National Coop Business Association.

42 – Text image: To learn more about cooperatives and community development, visit the National Cooperative Business Association at www.cooperative.org/economic.cfm

43 – Title slide: Direct sales to restaurants

Presenter: Restaurants and specialty stores such as health food outlets long have been prize

markets for many growers, because they are usually willing to pay premiums for quality, freshness and reliable delivery.

44 – Photo: restaurant photo

Presenter: In the competitive restaurant business, chefs continue to seek innovative ways to draw customers. Featuring fresh, unusual produce straight from the farm has become an increasingly popular way to do this.

45 – Restaurant photo

46 – Restaurant photo

Presenter: Growers need to cultivate relationships with chefs and food buyers and stay attuned to their needs. Maintaining good communication about what will be available and how chefs or buyers would like them harvested is key to successful sales.

47 – Text image: Upscale restaurants and specialty stores pay top dollar for quality produce and hard-to-get items. Growers usually can expect about 10 percent more than wholesale prices for standard items at mainstream restaurants.

48 – Text image: "Get to know how the chef wants the produce picked. If squash soup is on the menu, larger ones are okay. If the squash is to be presented whole on the plate, they can't be longer than 3 inches."
Cass Peterson

49 – Title slide: Mail order/Internet

Presenter: As mail order and Internet sales continue to grow, creative farmers are jumping on board. Both spell convenience for busy people looking for unique products. The good news: Farmers don't need to be computer experts to tap into millions of potential buyers, although maintaining a successful web site is time-consuming and challenging. If farmers already have a good customer base, web sites and mail-order strategies offer good ways to diversify and expand.

50 – Image: Wheat Montana website

51 – Image: Hartzler Dairy website

52 – Text image:
• Visit web sites that connect farmers and consumers. <www.localfarm.net>, <www.upick.com> and <www.smallfarms.com>
• Update your catalog or website often
• Find reliable shippers

53 - Title slide: Direct Marketing Meat

Presenter: For meat producers facing an increasingly concentrated market, direct marketing offers the opportunity to retain a greater share of product value. One good selling point is offering tastings for new customers. Marketing meat and animal products, however, means making food safety issues paramount.

54 - Photo: Meat tasting

55 – Text image: For more information about meat inspection regulations, see *The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing* by agricultural law professor Neil Hamilton.

56– Text image: For more information, check with FSIS

57– Text image: Strategic planning

Presenter: Overall, new enterprises such as agricultural direct-marketing strategies require strategic planning. Not only do farmers need to plan, but they also must consider ongoing evaluation against stated goals.

58 – Text image: Where do you want to be in 10 years?

Presenter: It's important to check in regularly to measure progress against 5- and 10-year goals. How do they fit with the farm family's goals and resources?

59 – Text image: Resources

Presenter: We've just laid out some alternative marketing ideas. You may want to seek help from your local extension agent and other experts from your land grant university to help make *your* idea a reality. Consult some of the resources listed on the last two pages of "Reap New Profits: Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers" for more sources of information about creating a strategic plan.

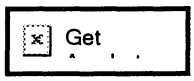
60 – Text image: Resources (continued)

61 – Photo/text image: Credits

Farmer Direct Marketing

Direct Marketing Publications

- **The California Agricultural Direct Marketing Study (.pdf format) New!**
- How To Direct-Market Farm Products on the Internet **(.pdf format)**
- Farmers Market Fact Sheet
- How to Establish a Farmers Market on Federal Property
- A Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery
- 2000 National Farmers Market Directory
- Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography - 2001 - Online and .pdf version available.
- Proceedings of the Farmers Market Development and Minority Participation Workshop (Santa Fe
- Direct Marketing Today: Challenges and Opportunities - In English **(.pdf format)**
  - In Spanish **(.pdf format)**
- Farmers Market Coloring Book **(.pdf format)** **(microsoft word)**
- National Directory of Farmers Market and Direct Marketing Associations 2001
- Improving and Facilitating a Farmers Market in a Low-Income Urban Neighborhood: A Washing Case Study **(.pdf format)**
- U.S. Farmers Markets--2000: A Study of Emerging Trends **(.pdf format)**



Some of the files contained here are in Adobe Acrobat [PDF] format. Visit the Adobe Ac Website, if you need to download the adobe acrobat reader used to view PDF files.

Farm to School Publications

- Innovative Marketing Opportunities for Small Farmers: Local Schools as Customers **(.pdf format)**
- How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers Are Building Alliances **(.pdf format)**
- Small Farm Bulletin No. 1 - "Marketing Fresh Produce to Local Schools: The North Florida Coo Experience" **(.pdf format)**
- Small Farm Bulletin No. 2 - "Cultivating Schools as Customers in a Local Market: The New Nor Cooperative" **(.pdf format)**
- Small Farm Bulletin No. 3 - "Acquiring Capital and Establishing a Credit History: The North Flo Cooperative Experience" **(.pdf format)**
- Small Farm Bulletin No. 4 - "Success of the New North Florida Cooperative: A Progress Report Producer Direct Sales to School Districts" **(.pdf format)**

Marketing Services Branch Publications: Selected Executive Summaries

- The Burlington Public Market: Phase I - Producer Survey and Analysis
- A Review of Little Rock's River Market Public Market and Farmers Market Operations **(.pdf form**
- Public Markets: Development and Management of Satellite Markets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Boston Public Market: Facility and Business Development Plan
- Southwest Virginia Shipping-Point Market Project Cooperative Development and Facility Design

- Evaluation of the Feasibility of a Centralized Marketing Facility for Maine's Agricultural Industries
- Floral Product Marketing in Greater Los Angeles, California
- Redevelopment Plans for the North Market - Columbus, Ohio
- Horticultural Shipping-point Market Project for Southwest Virginia
- The Feasibility of a Mid-Hudson Valley Wholesale Fresh Product Facility
- Thomasville, Georgia, Regional Market Facility Feasibility Study
- Farmers' Market Survey Report
- Green Book/Produce Market Information Directory Updated 10/31/03
- Survey of Interest in Creating an Agribusiness Park for Selected Maine Resource-based Industries
- New Agricultural Marketing Facilities for Northern Kentucky
- Toledo (Ohio) Fresh Food Public Market, A Feasibility Analysis
- A Model for Determining the Maneuvering Space Requirements for Tractor-Trailers at Loading Docks
- Regional Farmers' Market - A Marketing and Design Study Conducted for Springfield and Columbia, MO
- The Importance of Wholesale Produce Markets
- Refrigeration Systems for Wholesale Food Distribution Centers
- The Southwestern Michigan Fruit and Vegetable Industry: A Marketing Facilities Analysis
- Wholesale Food Distribution Center Grown and Development (Jessup, Maryland)
- Revitalization of Marketing Facilities for Syracuse, New York
- Feasibility of Establishing a Wholesale Farmers' Market in Upstate South Carolina
- Feasibility of Establishing a Farmers' Market in Tupelo, Mississippi

Full Print version ordering instructions

Return to Direct Marketing Home Page

Resources and Links

- Where can I get assistance for my market or project?
- Ecolabels and the Greening of the Food Market
- List Server and Internet Discussion Forum Information
- USDA/Other U.S. Government Programs/Resources Related to Direct Marketing
- Direct Marketing Resources by State
- On-line Articles and Publications About Direct Marketing
- Websites for Producers
- Websites for Consumers
- Websites for Kids
- Websites About Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA's)
- USDA Photo Library - Marketing
- National Directory of Farmers Market and Direct Marketing Associations 2001

- NxLevel Training Network - Offers training on agricultural entrepreneurship, shared-use kitchens & tourism

Return to Direct Marketing Home Page

United States
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Agricultural
Marketing
Service

August 2000

Farmers Market Coloring Book

"How to Buy" Guides!

Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA publishes a series of "How to Buy" guides which are geared towards consumers. Some producers like to distribute them to their farm direct marketing customers at the farmers market or at their farm stand.

The "How to Buy" guides are available free of charge. If you would like to receive copies to distribute please indicate the quantity below and your mailing address.

_____ How to buy fresh fruits
_____ How to buy fresh vegetables
_____ How to buy canned and frozen fruits
_____ How to buy canned and frozen vegetables
_____ How to buy meat
_____ How to buy poultry
_____ How to buy dairy products
_____ How to buy butter
_____ How to buy cheese
_____ How to buy eggs
_____ How to buy potatoes

Send your request to /fax/email it to:

Denny Johnson
USDA/AMS/TM/WAM
Room 2644 South
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250-0269
Phone: (202) 690-0531
Fax: (202) 690-0031
Email: denny.johnson@usda.gov

Wholesale and Alternative Markets Publications

Orders should be submitted by post, e-mail or fax to:

Velma R. Lakins
Wholesale and Alternative Markets Program - USDA
Room 2644 - South
1400 Independence Ave. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-0269
Fax: (202) 690-0031
Phone: (202) 720-8317
Email: velma.lakins@usda.gov

Please check the publications that you would like to receive. All of them are available free of charge:

___ Marketing Alternatives for the Revitalization of the Lynchburg Farmers Market, Lynchburg, VA 5/1983.
___ Proposed Master Plan, Montgomery State Farmers' Market, 12/1983.
___ Virginia Wholesale Farmers Market. Feasibility Study, 10/1984.
___ Improved Food Distribution Facilities for Southern New Jersey, 1/1986.
___ Expansion Planning for the Connecticut Regional Market at Hartford, 12/1986.
___ Improved Wholesale Food Marketing Facilities for Buffalo, NY, 5/1987.
___ Plans for Improved Wholesale Food Distribution Facilities for San Diego, CA, 8/1988.
___ Feasibility of Establishing a Farmers' Market in Tupelo, Mississippi, 9/1988.
___ Feasibility of Establishing a Wholesale Farmers' Market Upstate South Carolina, 12/1988.
___ Revitalization of Marketing Facilities for Syracuse, New York, 1/1989.
___ Wholesale Food Distribution Center Growth Development (Maryland Wholesale Food Center at Jessup, MD), 9/1989.
___ The West Harlem-Hudson Piers Meat Study, New York, NY, 1/1990.
___ The Southwestern Michigan Fruit and Vegetable Industry, A Marketing Facilities Analysis, 3/1990.
___ Wholesale Marketing Facilities for Maricopa County, Arizona, 9/1990.
___ Refrigeration Systems for Wholesale Food Distribution Centers, 12/1990
___ The Importance of Wholesale Produce Markets, 1/1991
___ Regional Farmers' Markets, A Marketing and Design Study (Missouri), 1/1993.
___ A Model for Determining the Maneuvering Space Requirements for Tractor-Trailers at Loading Docks, 2/1993.
___ 1994 National Farmers Market Directory, 1994.
___ Toledo (Ohio) Fresh Food Public Market, A Feasibility Analysis, 1/1994.
___ New Agricultural Marketing Facilities for Northern Kentucky, 1/1995.
___ Survey of Interest in Creating an Agribusiness Park for Selected Maine Resource-based Industries, 2/1995.
___ Green Book/Produce Market Information Directory, 1995.
___ Farmers' Market Survey Report, 6/1996.

___ Thomasville, Georgia, Regional Market Facility Feasibility Study, 6/1996.
___ The Feasibility of a Mid-Hudson Valley Wholesale Fresh Product Facility, 8/1996.
___ Horticultural Shipping-point Market Project for Southwest Virginia, 8/1996.
___ Redevelopment Plans for the North Market, Columbus, OH, 9/1996.
___ 1996 National Farmers' Market Directory, 12/1996.
___ Floral Product Marketing in Greater Los Angeles, California, 4/1997.
___ Evaluation of the Feasibility of a Centralized Marketing Facility for Maine's Agricultural Industries, 8/1997.
___ Southwest Virginia Shipping-Point Market Project Cooperative Development and Facility Design, 1/1998.
___ Boston Public Market Facility and Business Development Plan, 4/1998.
___ How to Establish a Farmers' Market on Federal Property, 4/1998.
___ Public Markets: Development and Management of Satellite Markets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 8/1998.
___ 1998 National Farmers Market Directory
___ Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography, 12/1998
___ A Review of Little Rock's River Market Public and Farmers Market Operations, 8/1999
___ The Burlington Public Market: Phase I - Producer Survey and Analysis, 9/1999
___ Brochure: Farmer Direct Marketing Program, 10/1999
___ Direct Marketing Today: Challenges and Opportunities, 2/2000
___ 2000 National Farmers Market Directory, 7/2000
___ USDA Farmers Market Coloring Book, Forthcoming

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United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Watershed Science Institute

April 2003

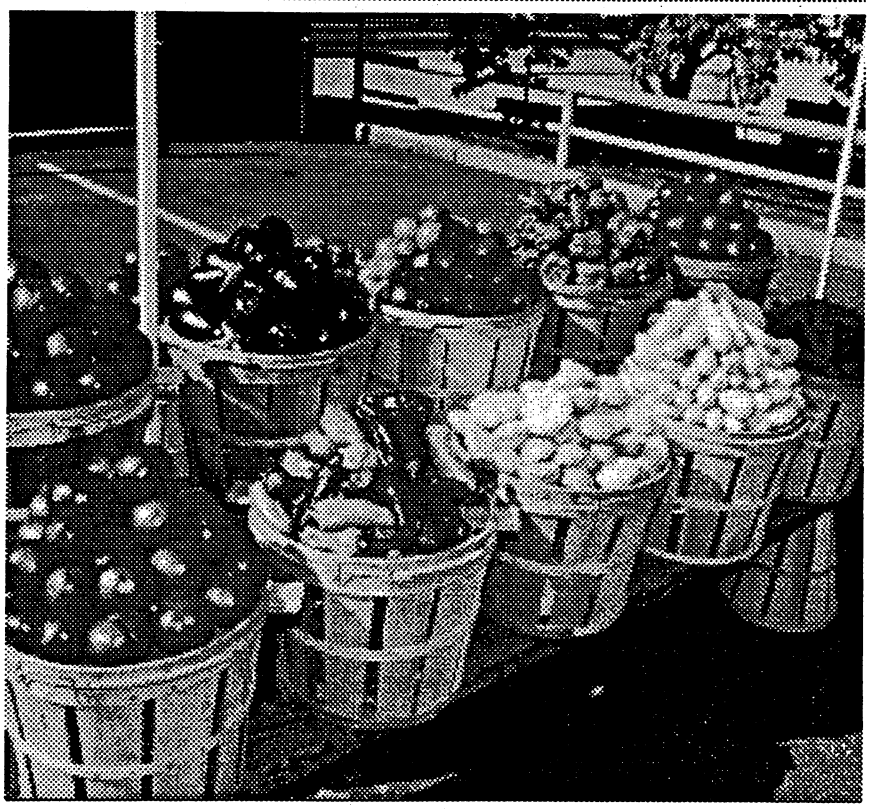
Ecological Sciences Technical Note 4, Sustainable Agriculture

Marketing Tips for Sustainable Agriculture

A practical way to support sustainable agriculture

By: Stefanie Aschmann and Jason Murphy

DRAFT



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Techniques for Marketing 5
Public Relations and Advertising 16
For More Information 16
Case Studies 18

For more information contact
USDA NRCS Watershed Science Institute
c/o NAC, UNL-East Campus, Lincoln, NE 68583-0822
(402) 437-5778 ext. 43, FAX (402) 437-5712

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Introduction

Producers who are working toward sustainability are often interested in new enterprises, products, or ways to market that can lead to greater profitability as well as greater environmental benefits. Maintaining a secure income is crucial for farmers and ranchers who anticipate changing their practices. Effective marketing can help ensure that the new enterprises and products will meet the needs of both farmers and their customers, providing the former with the income necessary to sustain the farm and the latter with goods and services they need and want. Sound marketing strategies can help protect against losses and enhance prospects for financial gain. Creative marketing strategies are just as important as production and conservation for a successful transition toward sustainability.

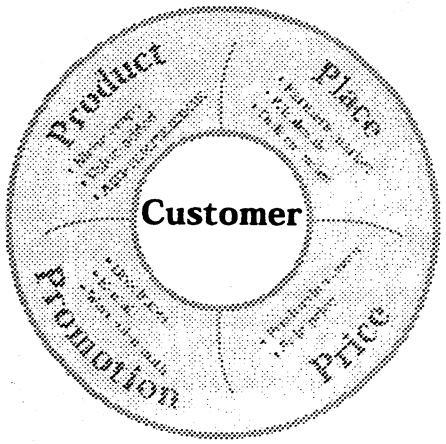
This technical note provides general guidance for developing marketing strategies and making marketing decisions in agricultural enterprises. It briefly describes how to develop a marketing strategy and explains a variety of techniques to increase net profitability of farm or ranch enterprises. It also provides numerous examples of marketing strategies that producers have used to increase farm profits.

What is Marketing?

Kotler (1988) defined marketing as "a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others." Marketing is more than just finding clever ways to dispose of your products. It is the process by which one attempts to determine what customers want, produce it, advertise it, package it, distribute it, and sell it. Think of marketing as a doughnut with the customer in the center (fig. 1). The doughnut is comprised of four P's: **Product** (goods and services to be supplied), **Place** (how the goods and services will be distributed), **Price** (the cost of goods and services to both farmers and customers) and **Promotion** (how the goods and services will be communicated to the customer). Together they keep the producer focused on the customer. Marketing starts and ends with the customer. Understanding this concept is the first step toward making your farm business more sustainable.

Historically, farmers grew crops and livestock and brought them to market to sell. Marketing was essential to the farming operation. Today, farmers and ranchers are more specialized. Producers tend to focus on production, while other specialists handle processing, advertising, distribution, and sales. The result has been a shrinking portion of the food dollar going to the farmer and an increasing portion to others. Farmers in the United States on average receive less than $0.20 of each dollar consumers spend on food. By refocusing some management efforts on the marketing of farm products, you can increase your share of the customer's costs and be better positioned to meet financial goals. You also assume the risk, inventory, and other costs associated with marketing.

Figure 1 The four P's of marketing



The two basic marketing approaches are **transactional** marketing and **relationship** marketing. The transactional approach seeks to make the largest number of sales possible, while the relationship approach seeks to cultivate loyal, repeat customers. Sustainable agriculture is best suited to relationship marketing. Transactional marketers increase profits by increasing sales or decreasing costs. Relationship marketers increase profits by producing quality products or services that command a higher price or by cutting costs. To command a higher price for products, customer values must be considered. The customer might place value on freshness, processing, packaging, environmentally sound or health conscious farming techniques, or improved product quality. A higher price may also be obtained by selling directly to the end consumer. By increasing involvement in marketing, farmers and ranchers can potentially increase profits and maintain a more sustainable farm enterprise. Marketing your products should not be taken lightly, however. Risks, additional time, and other resource commitments will demand attention.

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Developing a Marketing Strategy and Plan

Marketing begins by following a logical comprehensive plan. The plan should be straightforward and as simple as possible. A marketing plan should be an integral part of the overall farm plan. It should help focus energy and resources where they are needed. It should also help you adapt to consumer needs and make informed production decisions or changes. This note only touches on the development of marketing plans by describing some of their most common components. Additional resources on marketing plan development may be found in the section on Resource Materials and the list of references.

Goal setting

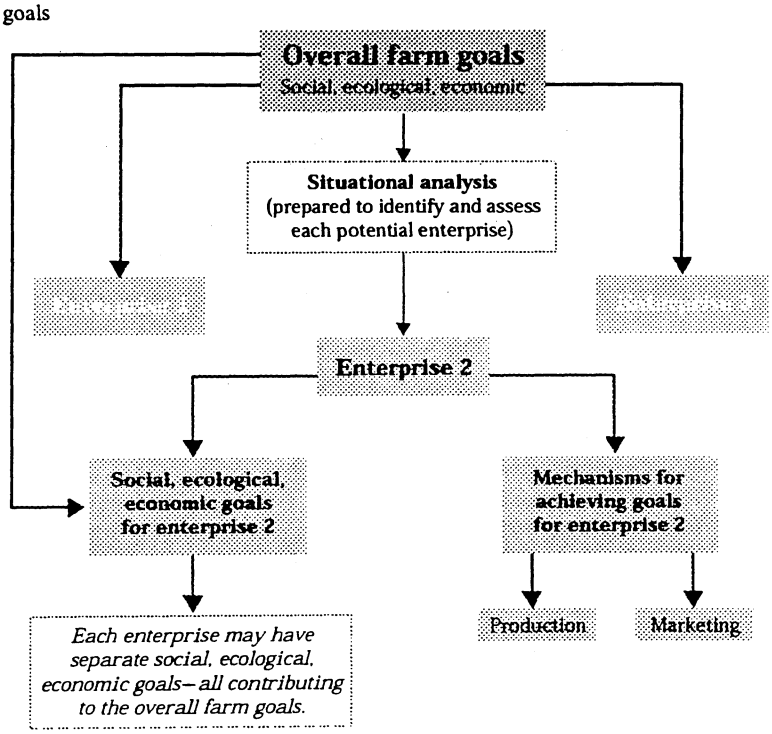
Overall goals for the farm or ranch should be clearly defined before developing a marketing plan. Whether lifestyle-oriented or financially-based, goals can help you make more meaningful decisions about which enterprises and markets are worth pursuing. To make decisions about marketing and production, you must also know your short- and long-term financial goals. Most people are in farming to make money, but how much, how soon, and at what personal and environmental costs varies from individual to individual. Sustainable farming operations often consider environmental protection as a major player along with economic considerations in the decisionmaking process. They focus on optimizing long-term income and environmental goals rather than maximizing short-term income. While producers may have an overall financial goal for the farm, the financial goals for individual enterprises on the farm may be different. Enterprise goals should support the overall farm goals, however Figure 2 illustrates the relationships among farm goals, enterprise goals, and mechanisms for achieving them.

Marketing plan components

A brief overview of the marketing plan follows. A marketing approach generally starts from the outside and works inward. It begins with an analysis of the macroenvironment, the customer, and customer needs. This information can then be used to formulate strategies and actions and develop production plans to meet these needs. A typical marketing plan should include at least the following components:

- Market or situational analysis
- Customers and customer needs
- Strategies for achieving goals
- Budget
- Action plan
- Monitoring plan

Figure 2 Marketing goals



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Component #1—Market or Situational Analysis. Marketing decisions are often shaped by external forces. The situational analysis should evaluate the external forces that may influence what products and services you can produce. Changing demographics, changes in family unit, aging populations, available natural resources (water, soil, climate), and changes in the ethnic makeup of populations may affect farmer choices. Economic, political, and legal trends may also influence decisions. What is the impact of new technology? What about people's increasing fear of contamination of the food supply? This component of the plan analyzes strengths and weaknesses of the current farming operation and considers economic, social, and natural resource attributes and risks associated with each enterprise.

Component #2—Customers and Customer Needs. The purpose of the needs assessment is to identify customers and their needs. This section of the marketing plan should answer the following questions:

- Who are my customers?
- What do they want?
- What can the competition provide them?
- What can I provide them that the competition cannot?

Customers may be identified by age, income level, gender, profession, or some other category such as environmental concerns or health consciousness. Each group of customers has values and special needs that you may or may not be able to meet. Identifying customers and their needs can help you focus on effectively reaching them. You must also identify the competition. Where are your customers shopping now? Are they getting what they want? Again, simplicity is the key. A comprehensive (i.e., expensive) needs analysis is generally not cost-effective when considering small-scale enterprises. A variety of texts on marketing research are available. For basic information on how to conduct market research, see *The Marketing Research Guide* by Stevens, Wrenn, Ruddick, and Sherwood (1997), for example. This text may be available through your local library. New or used copies are also available through many of the major booksellers.

Component #3—Strategies for Achieving Goals. A marketing plan typically includes one or more broad strategies for achieving marketing goals. Strategies are the link between objectives and actions. They help determine the actions needed to accomplish your goals. Marketing strategy options might include:

- Developing new markets for existing products or services
- Improving products/services to reach new markets
- Increasing customer satisfaction by improving products or increasing product diversity
- Providing new products to new customers
- Reducing the resources expended on a particular product or service
- Terminating a particular enterprise

Different strategies may be needed for different products or services. Before deciding on strategic approaches, consider all aspects of the potential product that might affect its ultimate marketability. For example, will the product be organically produced or will it be marketed blemish-free? Will the product be distributed through brokers, wholesalers, retailers, farmers' markets, or sold directly on the farm? How will the product be priced? Will low prices be the aim or higher prices in return for some added value in the product? Finally, what will the market position be? For example, unique position might be secured through marketing the product as flavorful, exotic, nutritional, or environmentally sound.

Component #4—Action Plan. The action plan is the "to do" part of the marketing plan. It describes how the plan will be implemented, who will carry out the various stages of the plan, and when they should be started and completed. This section of the plan usually benefits from detailed information so that it will be easier to implement. An action plan should be developed for each customer group-product combination.

Component #5—Budget. A budget needs to be developed in conjunction with the action plan. How much potential income can be derived from this new way of marketing? How much of this can be made in the first year? The first 5 years? Write down each step of the thought process—how much it will cost and how much income may be gained. Keep records of actual expenses and revise the budget as accurate information becomes available.

Component #6—Monitoring Plan. Finally, a marketing plan should describe how progress toward meeting your goals would be monitored and measured. The marketing plan may need to be revised if goals are not being met. New strategies may be needed or existing strategies revisited. Be prepared to be flexible.

A worksheet to help entrepreneurs develop a marketing plan is available on the University of Nebraska Web site at **http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/consumered/nf283.htm.** Marketing plan worksheets have been developed in many other states as well. Contact your local extension service for more information.

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Techniques for Marketing

Your goals, resources, and products as well as local customer needs and habits usually dictate how marketing strategies are developed. Some of the many marketing options suitable for farm or ranch operations are summarized here. An infinite number of variations on these options exists—the only limitation is one's creativity. The four P's of marketing (**Product, Place, Price,** and **Promotion**) are highlighted in extensive case examples in this technical note.

Value added products

To a miller, the grain produced by farmers is the raw material from which valuable primary products (flour, cereals, wheat berries, bulgur, or bran) are made. To a bakery, primary products include bread, cookies, pastas, and tortillas. Very little of the retail price of flour, cereal, or cookies actually goes to the farmer. Yet, people are willing to pay high prices for these products and services. Therefore, when farmers go beyond the raw material and produce primary or secondary products, they add value to their commodities. This increased value can potentially increase farm income several-fold. However, adding value also has costs.

Value can be added to farm products in many ways. Packaging of products alone can significantly increase their value to customers, whether wholesale or retail. For example, a producer who assembles a mixture of beans and spices with an attached recipe for bean soup usually sells the "finished" product for many times what the raw beans or spices are worth as individual commodities. Jams, jellies, bread mixes, salad mixes, juices, and sun-dried fruit are other examples of value-added products. These additional opportunities and benefits usually come with additional regulatory control, however, especially at the State and local level. Permits, health inspections, and special facilities may be required if foods are processed on the farm.

For more information on value-added agriculture, see NRCS *Alternative Enterprises — Value-Added Agriculture* Information Sheet AE-4. It may be obtained by calling 1-888-LANDCARE or by visiting **http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise**

Figure 3 Adding value to farm products, such as this maple syrup, can be as simple as packaging or involve more complex processing (photo courtesy of USDA)

Cooperative marketing

Donald Frederick (1997) defines a cooperative as "business owned and democratically controlled by the people who use its services and whose benefits are derived and distributed equitably on the basis of use." Cooperatives differ from other forms of business in that the people who finance and control the cooperative are the same ones that use it. Cooperatives are popular in the agricultural community. Through cooperatives, farmers can pool their financial resources and conduct business more efficiently than they could as individuals.

Cooperatives exist in many forms. Supply cooperatives pool resources to purchase inputs for members. By purchasing these inputs in large quantities, members can reduce their costs through volume discounts. Cooperatives may provide services to members that other companies do not provide. They can also provide farmers with access to markets where they otherwise could not compete.

Most small, limited resource farms are not able to produce sufficient quantities of their product to realize gains from economies of scale. Greater production gives the farmer more power to negotiate better prices. By pooling the production of many farmers, a marketing cooperative has more leverage to negotiate the price received for its commodities. All members of the cooperative benefit from the higher price. The member who supplies 10,000

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bushels of corn will receive the same price per bushel as the member who supplies 100,000 bushels, because together they have furnished more product and thus, achieved more control over price than either of them had alone. Marketing cooperatives can also help find buyers for the members' product, a major concern for producers of perishable crops.

Effective cooperation does not always involve formal organizations with bylaws and regulations. Cooperative activities among neighbors can occur at any level. Communal harvesting (fig. 4) and barn building (common among the Amish community) are examples of cooperative ventures. One cooperative marketing strategy used by farmers with small acreages is to share the maintenance and supply of a produce stand. While bigger is not always better, increasing the variety of produce available in a direct marketing outlet can encourage a larger customer base.

A cooperative approach works best when the producers live relatively close to each other geographically. Consult local extension personnel about cooperatives in your area or about forming one.

Figure 4 Members of the New North Florida Cooperative harvest collard greens and will wash, chop, package, and distribute the vegetables to local school districts *(photo courtesy of USDA NRCS)*

Case Examples

The **Rolling Prairie Farmers Alliance** is a farmer cooperative established in 1993 to run a vegetable subscription service. Eight farms supply fruits and vegetables to 350 subscription members. The customers each pay a deposit at the beginning of the season, which allows (and obligates) them to purchase a bag of garden fresh vegetables each week for (at most) $11.25. A portion of the deposit is used to run the cooperative.

By pooling their resources the farmers are able to supply more customers with a wider variety of produce, and more reliably than a single farm could typically accomplish. Farmer members agree at the beginning of the season what they will grow. Each week they inform the production manager of the amount of produce they can provide. The manager determines how much will be needed and coordinates delivery. Site coordinators distribute the food among the customer members. Most of the cooperative farmers sell through other outlets as well, but the subscription service gives them a reliable baseline income through the growing season.

Product: Locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables
Place: Customers come to central location
Price: Pre-set by cooperative
Promotion: Word-of-mouth, newsletter, flyers
Customers: Local urban consumers

The **Hampshire County Feeder Calf Producers Association** in northeastern West Virginia was established as a result of efforts by the local Cooperative Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Farm Services Agency to strengthen community interaction. Nine farmers joined together to cooperatively market calves. The calves are sold by the cooperative at a special board sale. Bidders are connected to buyers over the telephone. The cattle are bought sight unseen. As a condition of sale, buyers must pick up the calves in 10 days. The calves are assembled and weighed at a designated location just before loading for transport to a feedlot.

Members of the cooperative strive to produce uniform, high quality cattle on each of their farms. They use the same management practices for feeding, vaccination, and weaning. All of the calves are weaned 45 days before sale. The cooperative strives to maintain uniform calving and genetics for their respective herds and emphasizes safe and stress-free handling of the animals. The animal handlers do not use electric cattle prods.

Cooperative members visit the feedlots that purchase their cattle annually. These visits help the producers evaluate the performance of their cattle and determine what they can do to improve next year's calves. This also shows the feedlot owners that the producers are willing to work to meet their needs.

The cooperative recently started a limited liability corporation called Headwaters Petite Beef that markets beef directly to the consumer.

Product: Uniform, stress-free feeder calves
Place: Local pick-up

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Price: Commensurate with high quality, standard product
Promotion: Cooperative research, flyers, letters, phone calls, site visits
Customers: Local (regional) feedlots

The **New North Florida Cooperative** was started in 1995 to help minority farmers in the Florida Panhandle increase their incomes through innovative marketing. Unlike many cooperatives that require a substantial membership fee, the New North Florida Cooperative demands "sweat equity." The cooperative members help each other with harvesting and processing, demonstrating the benefits of working together.

The cooperative strives first to tap the local market rather than the regional market. Not only are transportation costs lower, but also the resources remain in the community, helping the local economy. Another cooperative objective is to provide the farmer members with higher prices for their produce by taking the crop from the field directly to the consumers. Members help harvest, wash, process, package, and deliver their fruits and vegetables to local markets. Currently the largest customers serviced by the cooperative are the public school systems in Jackson and Gadsden counties in the Florida Panhandle. By purchasing through the cooperative, the school systems are able to support local formers without having to enter into contracts with them individually.

Product: Processed fresh vegetables and fruit
Place: Local delivery
Price: Premium wholesale
Promotion: Cooperative function, direct contact, flyers, Internet
Customers: Local institutions (schools), local groceries

Direct marketing

Direct marketing is a rapidly expanding type of farm marketing that is based on selling a product directly to the consumer. It involves the elimination of one or possibly several middle steps in the marketing process. As a result, the percentage of retail price that the producer receives is significantly increased. Several ways of direct marketing are described in this section.

Farmers' markets

The term *farmers' market* is used to describe a market where farmers sell directly to the consumer, but this marketing system could also be called a *community market* because of the benefits it provides directly to the community (Marr and Gast, 1991).

Farmers' markets are among the oldest and most effective forms of direct marketing for small-volume producers. They allow farmers to increase their income, reduce transportation and distribution costs, and communicate directly with their customers. At the same time, consumers are provided direct access to fresh, locally grown produce and a chance to interact with the farmer (Ensor and Winn, 1993). Farmers' markets also benefit the community by bringing diverse customers and vendors together to strengthen personal ties. Sponsorship of farmers' markets may come from communities, state or local community service agencies, extension or education programs, and private citizens (Marr and Gast 1991).

Farmers' markets continue to increase in popularity (fig. 5). According to the 2000 National Farmers Market Directory, more than 2,850 farmers' markets are currently in the United States as compared with 1,755 in 1994 (USDA AMS, 2001). In a 1994 survey, the USDA determined that more than 20,000 farmers sold products at farmers' markets. More than 6,000 farmers used these markets as their sole outlet (Burnes and Johnson, 1996). Estimates place fruit and vegetable sales through farmers' markets at over $1 billion annually. More than a million customers visit farmers' markets every week. These markets primarily provide access to customers for the small- and medium-sized farm operations (Burnes and Johnson, 1996).

Figure 5 Farmers' markets are increasing in popularity across the United States (photo courtesy of USDA)

Participating in farmers' markets benefits sustainable agriculture. Local farmers' markets provide an excellent forum for community participation and interaction with customers as well as other farmers. Farmers who are in contact with their customers have an outstanding opportunity to do market research. Consumers have the opportunity to get to know the farmers who produce their food and to make their desires and concerns known.

To locate a farmers' market in your area, see the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Web site: **http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/**, or check with you local extension service.

Case Examples

One of the largest farmers' markets in the country, the **Atlanta Farmers' Market** is owned and operated by the State of Georgia. The facility was built on public land in 1959. It is 922,000 square feet of permanent warehouse space and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The market supports both wholesale and retail transactions. Farmers come from Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Florida to sell their produce here. Each year the Atlanta Farmers' Market generates $4 million in revenue from rentals alone. Wholesalers rent warehouse space while farmers rent open-shed space.

Product: Regionally grown, fresh produce
Place: Customers come to the market
Price: Wholesale, some retail
Promotion: Internet, state publications
Customers: Wholesalers, farmers, local consumers

The **Kittitas County Farmers' Market** is a relatively small, privately run, nonprofit farmer's market in Ellensburg, Washington. It has been in operation since 1994 when a group of farmers got together to find an outlet for selling their produce directly to consumers. Originally situated in a school play yard, the market has moved to a bank parking lot near the center of town, much to everyone's satisfaction. The market is run by an elected board of directors. Vendors pay a nominal fee for space, the land is donated, and nearly all labor is volunteer. Most of the expenses associated with this farmers' market involve advertising.

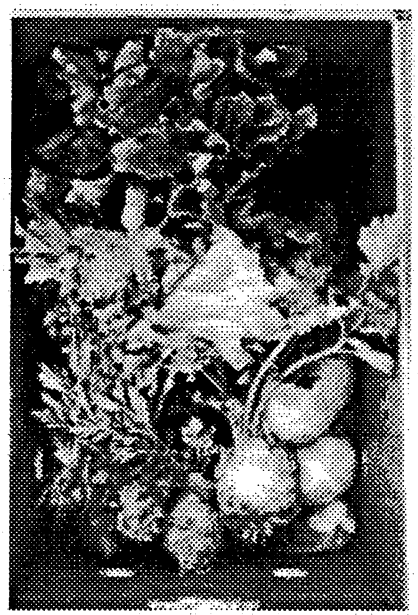
Product: Local produce and homemade crafts
Place: Customers come to the market
Price: Competitive retail
Promotion: Flyers, media, word of mouth
Customers: Nearby residents and visitors

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is a growing and purchasing partnership between farmers and members of the local community. The farmer grows food for a group of shareholders (subscribers) who pledge to buy a portion of the farm's crop that season. The exact agreement between the farmer and the shareholder varies.

A share generally is targeted at providing a family with a weekly supply of vegetables and fruits and sometimes eggs, poultry, meat, and cheese for the duration of the growing season (fig. 6). The shares are paid to the farmer either before the growing season or in installments during the season. These payments provide the farmer with guaranteed income from the beginning of the season and a market for the farm's products. Consumers share both benefits and risks with the farmer. In good years they reap the bounty, but in bad years they share the loss. CSA members are typically families, but may also include restaurants, farmers' markets, or institutions. CSAs provide the consumer a fresh, high quality supply of produce, knowledge that they are supporting a local farm, and a way to connect with their food source. Many CSA enterprises operate as organic farms.

Currently, about 1,000 CSA operations are in the U.S. and Canada. Most are organized and run by individual farmers, but some are organized and run by consumers. Increasingly, CSAs may include more than one agricultural producer. All build stronger farmer and consumer relationships. For more information see NRCS information sheet AE-2, Alternative Enterprises–Community Supported Agriculture.

Figure 6 Typically, a weekly share of farm produce includes a variety of seasonal vegetables (photo courtesy of Common Good Farm CSA)



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Case Examples

The **Hartford Food System** is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to help low income communities get better access to high quality, lower cost food. In 1994, the Hartford Food System established the Holcomb Farm CSA project in Connecticut as a way to help connect lower income, inner city groups with their food source.

The farm currently supports the equivalent of 400 household shares, 60 percent of which are sold at full price to upper income families in the Greater Hartford area. The remaining 40 percent is sold at a discount to a variety of nonprofit organizations that distribute food to low-income families. These groups range from senior centers and housing projects to a group that distributes food to low-income families.

Of the direct farm operating costs, 90 percent are covered by share sales. The remaining costs associated with recruiting, marketing, education, and distribution are funded through individual contributions and grants.

In addition to a weekly box of food, the CSA provides cooking demonstrations, educational classes, field trips, and other outreach programs for the low-income and volunteer groups involved. Members may work on the farm, but are not required to do so.

Product: Healthy fruits and vegetables
Place: Local delivery and pickup
Price: Based on income (charity price support)
Promotion: Education, field trips, cooking classes
Customers: Low-income families; high income families; non-profit organizations

The **Covelo Organic Vegetables CSA** is one of two CSAs in Covelo, a small community of 1,300 residents near the north coast of California. The CSA serves 80 regular subscribers in the county and 20 subscribers in Berkeley, 200 miles to the south. In addition to regular customers, they supply 100 extra boxes per week for 15 weeks to the Round Valley Indian Health Clinic. The clinic hopes to help diabetics on the local Indian reservation improve their diet with fresh fruits and vegetables. The farm also sells vegetables and flowers at six farmers' markets.

The growing season in this area is 25 weeks. CSA subscribers pay $12 per box picked up at the farm or $15 per box delivered either to their door or to a nearby drop-off location. Each box contains up to eight types of fruit or vegetables and a weekly newsletter. A 10-week payment is requested in advance. Flowers are sold separately, but may be included with the vegetable delivery at the customer's request.

Product: Organic vegetables
Place: Home delivery, local pickup, farmers' market delivery
Price: Competitive
Promotion: Word-of-mouth, e-mail, newsletter
Customers: Local consumers

Internet marketing

The Internet has revolutionized how people communicate and shop. For some farmers it has also revolutionized the way they market their products. Many farmers have started their own Web sites to distribute information about their farm, transact sales, or both. Opening this "digital storefront" allows them to market to the entire world. The site is an advertisement that tells the story of a farm, giving consumers who are not familiar with a particular operation a virtual picture. It is an easy way to expand sales beyond conventional reach. Internet marketing is particularly effective for farmers in remote locations who cannot easily take advantage of more traditional urban markets. In 2001 web sites could be hosted by local Internet providers for $6 to $60 per month depending on the amount of Web traffic anticipated. Alternatively, some providers may host certain Web sites free in return for advertising privileges on a site. Setting up and operating a Web site does not require a degree in computer engineering, but professional graphics design consultants are widely available to help with design, installation, and maintenance of Web sites if needed.

Web site objectives should be considered before setting up the site. Determine if the Web site will be primarily used to advertise a product, provide information, or mediate actual sales. Web sites intended to sell seasonal products or keep customers informed about the farming operations, seasonal prices of goods, or when certain crops will be ripe must be frequently maintained and updated. If the objective is to save time, labor, money, or material and that objective is critical, a Web site may not be appropriate, and some farmers may find the maintenance aspect too time consuming.

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A site must compete with hundreds of similar sites on the Internet. Strategies for obtaining and increasing Web site traffic follow:

1. Select a domain name that is easy to spell, meaningful, professional, and sends a marketing message.
2. Register the site with a search engine.
3. Provide links to other sites of interest to potential customers.
4. Personalize the Web site and make it interactive.
5. Show the Web site address everywhere—on business cards, labels, brochures, and newsletters.
6. Keep the Web site updated and fresh.

Even if the objective is not to sell items through a Web site, a site can still offer some advantages including e-mail contacts for questions, concerns, or even orders. However, if the objective is to sell products online, a site that is secure for credit card purchases is critical. A good Web site also provides contact information for customers who wish to phone or fax in orders (Sustainable Agricultural Network, 1997).

If you do not want to maintain a Web site, you can communicate with customers via e-mail rather than through a Web site. Commercial Internet directories, such as *smallfarm.com* and *localharvest.org*, can provide customers with access to farm Internet addresses. Producer associations and State Departments of Agriculture may also provide directories. Developing an e-mail mailing list of your own, sending out e-mail newsletters, and leaving your e-mail address in community plans are other ways of getting the word out about your farm.

Case Examples

Jeanie Dixon from Pasco, Washington, grows, paints, and sells ornamental gourds. Her Web site, **http://www.gourdsbyJeanie.com**, is full of information and links to information about gourds. Her purpose is not so much to sell gourds as to help connect gourd enthusiasts with each other and locate new sources of gourds for her craft. Her Web site includes numerous links to gourd associations, gourd growers, and information on growing and decorating gourds. "The demand for gourds far exceeds the supply," she says. "They're easy to grow and can be quite profitable. A farmer with a few acres of unused land who wants to try something new should consider growing gourds." Jeanie hopes her Web site will help prospective gourd growers get started.

Product: Gourds and gourd products
Place: Internet mail-order, local consignment
Price: Competitive
Promotion: Internet, newspaper, crafts organizations
Customers: Gourd lovers and users, gourd growers

Dunton Family Farms in Oregon sells heirloom vegetable, herb, and wildflower seeds through the Victory Seed Company at their Web site, **http://www.victoryseeds.com**. At first it was difficult to make sales over the Internet because they could not accept credit cards. Once they invested in a secure Web site and credit card processing, their business doubled. Mike Dunton says the Internet has been far more cost-effective for them than traditional advertising, allowing them to reach many more customers for a much lower cost. However, he notes that it is only cost-effective because the Web site is managed with in-house resources. If management of the Web site were contracted out, the costs would quickly mount.

Product: Heirloom seeds
Place: Mail order (national distribution)
Price: Premium
Promotion: Internet Web site, catalogs, word-of-mouth
Customers: Organic growers, individual gardeners, specialized nurseries

Joan Shaw and her husband grow "low spray" heirloom apples on 20 acres in northern Utah. Joan manages a Web site, **http://www.dragongoose.com**, in which she publishes essays on gardening (especially roses) and growing apples. To pay for the Web site, she has become an associate advertiser for amazon.com. She receives a small percentage of any book sales that occur through a link from her Web site to amazon.com. The income is not great, but it paid for the Web site three times over last year. "There are other companies who offer similar options," she says.

Product: Web site
Place: Internet links
Price: Percentage of book sales
Promotion: Promotes books through Web site
Customer: amazon.com

On-farm sales

The on-farm store or roadside stand (fig. 7) is a common and traditional means of marketing farm products. Like other means of direct marketing, on-farm stores provide commodities from the producer directly to the consumer, eliminating middle costs.

The costs for establishing an on-farm store or roadside stand can range from virtually nothing for a simple stand to very expensive for an elaborate store. However, the success of on-farm sales depends on location, consumer preferences, and labor. Costs can mount quickly if someone must be on duty at all times. Profits will suffer if the location is too far from a good customer base. Regulations, laws, and rules vary by location, so it is important to contact local and county authorities before establishing a roadside or on-farm stand. In general, regulations tend to be more complex when produce leaves the farm than when it is sold on the farm (Tronstad, 1995).

Figure 7 Roadside stand or on-farm stand (photo courtesy of Gizdich Ranch)

If on-farm sales are a part of your marketing strategy, start by selling those items that you are good at producing, then offer a few higher quality items. Ask customers what other products they would be interested in purchasing, and build the product selection based on their suggestions.

One strategy that has been successful for some on-farm marketers is enterprise blending. A farm that sells both fruit and crafts, for example, may sell more of each than if only one of these items is available. This purchasing phenomenon happens because each enterprise attracts a different type of buyer, but the buyer often discovers an interest in the other enterprise after arriving at the farm. One farmer who sells both sweet corn and peaches says that the people who come to the farm for the sweet corn often leave with a box of peaches, too.

Atmosphere is especially important to on-farm sales. Keeping a store or stand neat and attractive will go a long way toward gaining sales. Some farmers emphasize the rural nature of the market by displaying old equipment or implements. Ultimately, the personal touch is important in creating this atmosphere. Simple things like a friendly greeting, providing useful information, and visiting with customers encourages repeat business (Gibson, 1994). Maintaining regular hours and a variety of products also attracts customers.

Case Example

Dan Shepherd and his wife raise buffalo, pecans, sweet corn, and eastern gammagrass on their farm in central Missouri. They have been selling buffalo meat and pecans on-farm since 1990. Over time, the enterprise has developed into a full-fledged on-farm store. In 1991, they constructed a building that houses offices and a pecan processing area as well as the store itself. Today, in addition to their own farm produce, they sell products from elsewhere in Missouri, including peaches, jams, jellies, barbecue sauce, cards, and cookbooks. The store is open every day until 6:00 p.m. During peak seasons, such as Christmas and the summer months when sweet corn and peaches are available, they may have 400 to 500 sales per day. During the slow seasons (September and January) they may have only 10 visitors per day. Since there is always someone at the farmstead, the store remains open even when visitors are few.

Dan says that on-farm sales are not for everyone. You have to like talking with people. "People come to the store to buy something. It's my job to make sure they walk out with something. It takes a certain personality to be a sales person," he says. He also notes farms that host visitors need to be kept neat and clean to attract customers and encourage them to buy. "Appearance makes a big difference," he says.

Product: Buffalo meat, sweet corn, regional produce, and gifts
Place: On-farm pickup
Price: Retail
Promotion: Local media
Customers: Urban visitors

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Pick-Your-Own

Pick-your-own or "U-pick" operations offer several advantages. First, they reduce labor costs involved with harvesting, washing, and grading. Customers pay lower prices and experience being out in the field, harvesting the crop, and enjoying the country atmosphere. Crops that are easy to recognize as ripe, such as blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries (fig. 8) are popular U-pick crops (Tronstad, 1995). These enterprises often work well when combined with farm tours.

Figure 8 U-pick operations give customers fresh produce and the experience of harvesting a crop and enjoying the country atmosphere (photo courtesy of Gizdich Ranch)

Before deciding on a U-pick operation, carefully consider all that is involved with opening the farm to the public. Some of the typical requirements are: parking spaces, liability insurance, and a willingness to deal with the public (Sustainable Agricultural Network, 1997). Another risk associated with these enterprises is spoilage, particularly, but not exclusively, if bad weather keeps customers away during critical times.

Agri-entertainment

Agri-entertainment is another dimension that can be added to pick-your-own or other on-farm marketing strategies. This is simply another means of attracting additional customers to the farm. Agri-entertainment can involve a broad spectrum of activities including festivals, special events, hayrides, contests, mazes, cooking classes, agri-educational tours, or recreational hunting, fishing, or hiking (fig. 9). Agri-entertainment may attract a different set of customers than would otherwise visit the farm. If carefully planned and advertised, it may be an effective means of increasing your customer base and profits.

Figure 9 Agri-entertainment brings the farm experience to tourists.

Agri-entertainment can be time consuming and may involve liability and other legal issues, but it may also be very rewarding. Some farmers find entertainment production as enjoyable as food and fiber production. Gibson (1994) recommends that anyone contemplating developing rural attractions on their farm for agri-entertainment should start simply; for example, by providing a shaded picnic area for visitors to the farm. Use the rural setting as an advantage.

Case Example

Ioka Family Farms in the Hancock Valley, Massachusetts, was a dairy farm for over 60 years before the family decided to convert to a visitor-oriented farm. Located near the Berkshires, a year-round tourist center, the farm is ideally situated for this purpose.

The farm provides entertainment during all four seasons. On weekends mid-February through mid-April, visitors can visit the 2,400-tap Sugar Bush to view the process of boiling maple syrup and enjoy pancake meals with maple syrup in the Calf-A. Summer activities include pick-your-own strawberries, a petting zoo, a hay tunnel and hay pile, giant sandboxes, Molly Milk Me (the mechanical cow), pedal tractors, a book and game library, an outdoor farm-theme playground, hay rides, and a picnic area. Fall activities include hayrides on a giant pumpkin or haunted house, pumpkin picking, spooky hay tunnel, corn maze, and farm stand. In the winter, Christmas trees may be selected in the field or from a pre-cut selection at the farm stand. Hayrides are also offered, and the second week in December, Santa visits the farm for "Breakfast with Santa" at the Calf-A.

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Most of the visitor-oriented seasons are doing well except the summer program. The family had hoped to entice 10,000 visitors to the farm during the summer. To date they are several thousand visitors short of their goal. Customers are almost always pleased once they arrive, but convincing them to come to the farm and paying an admission fee has been a challenge, especially for people that live locally.

The family is in the process of evaluating the reasons for low attendance. Possibilities include weekend weather conditions, farm located too far from a large urban area, the entertainment may focus too narrowly on young children ages 2-10, customers are not yet comfortable with the idea of paying to visit a farm, and there are too many farms doing the same thing, saturating the market.

Product: Farm entertainment, maple syrup, Christmas trees; berries, pumpkins, value-added products
Place: On-farm visits and pickup
Price: Under evaluation
Promotion: Tourist bureau, Internet
Customers: Local families with young children

Other forms of direct marketing
Other direct marketing strategies include mail order marketing, delivery service, and rent-a-row or tree. Mail order businesses allow the farmer to charge premium prices for a product without having to face the public directly. This may be important to those who prefer privacy. Products sold must be storable, ship well, and be relatively lightweight. Seed sales often make effective mail order businesses. In mail order businesses, organization, promptness, and detailed record keeping are critical to success. Another critical component of mail order marketing is the mailing list. Developing an effective mailing list can take several years. Lists developed by others generally are not effective, as the customers you want to target need to be customers interested in your product(s).

Case Example

Dunton Family Farms in Oregon has been transitioning from local sales of seasonal produce, nuts, hay, beef, and eggs to mail order and Web-based sales of heirloom seeds from their company, the Victory Seed Company. Customers may order over the Internet or through a standard seed catalog. Mike Dunton says both are needed. The Internet reaches a wider audience, and Internet customers are more likely to be spontaneous buyers; but many customers want a catalog in hand before they order. A printed catalog also gives a sense of legitimacy to the operation. Anyone can create a Web site, but farmers who invest in printed sales materials give the appearance of being serious about selling their products.

Product: Heirloom seeds
Place: Mail order (catalog and internet)
Price: Premium
Promotion: Internet Web site, catalogs, word of mouth
Customers: Organic growers, individual gardeners, specialized nurseries

Farmers or groups of farmers who run delivery services can command high prices for their products. However, locating and retaining customers for delivery services can be extremely time-consuming, and transportation costs can rapidly add up. Another issue is reliability. Customers will remain loyal only if they receive what they are promised when it is promised. Still, if time and resources are available to implement this strategy, the personal and financial rewards can be great.

Case Example

Seabreeze Organic Farm in San Diego, California, has been operating a produce delivery service for local customers for about 5 years. Produce was originally sold through farmers' markets, but as the number of farmers' markets increased, the customer base became diluted. Stephenie Caughlin, general manager, decided to bring the market to the customer instead of asking the customer to come to the market. Seabreeze customers prepay for weekly boxes of produce a month in advance. Food is delivered to their door along with a newsletter and recipes. Currently, 250 homes receive weekly boxes at a price of $20 to 40 each. Seabreeze has a Web site, but their most effective advertising has been through word-of-mouth and fliers left on doorknobs throughout the delivery area. A local marketing firm performs this latter task for the farm.

Product: Organic vegetables and health products
Place: Home delivery in local neighborhoods
Price: Based on service
Promotion: Flyers left on doors (hired advertising)
Customers: Local urban consumers interested in healthy foods and convenience

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Another direct marketing strategy that may work on some farms located near urban centers is the "rent a row, tree, or animal" strategy. Here the customer pays to rent a plot of land, a tree, or an animal, such as a milk cow, at the beginning of the growing season. The farmer provides labor and inputs needed to grow the crop or produce the animal product. Then the customer receives and sometimes harvests the crop or animal product at the end of the year. This marketing strategy could be considered a variation on the U-pick strategy, but for the farmer it eliminates much of the risk involved with U-pick, as payment is up-front. One of the difficulties with this strategy is the need to keep track of the management practices implemented on each item rented. Another problem may be keeping track of the renters, some of whom may wish to visit their rental regularly. Scheduling public access to the farm must be included in the up-front planning.

Case Examples

Steve and Diana Harris of **Shiloh Fruits** in Greenleaf, Idaho, grow a variety of fruit trees and market both fruit and cider through a number of channels. Some of these include an on-farm store, a farmers' market, and a rent-a-tree program. An accessible portion of their orchard has been set aside for individual tree rental. Bartlet pear and five varieties of apple trees are available for annual rent. Prices vary according to the size of the tree. Most rental customers have been individual families.

Steve notes that, while the rent-a-tree program has not yet taken off, the concept is gradually becoming more accepted. Those customers who do rent trees often return to rent again. They are also likely to buy other fruits, such as peaches, apricots, or cherries, from the farm store.

Product: Apples, pears
Place: On-farm pickup, wholesale
Price: Retail, wholesale
Promotion: Flyers, letters, business cards, Web site
Customers: Local fruit-lovers, wholesalers

Rent Mother Nature is the trademark name for Shared Harvest, a company operating out of the Boston area since 1979. Customers can rent a maple tree, beehive, cow (for cheese), sheep (for wool), apple tree, and many other items. Upon purchase, customers receive a personalized lease document and an announcement folder describing the program. Progress reports are mailed to lease holders throughout the growing season. An action photo of the tree, hive, sheep, or other leased item is also provided. The harvested product is delivered at the end of the season.

The company was started in an effort to help small farmers market their products and bring urban dwellers closer to the source of their food. It grew from the idea that, while most farm products are widely available, the farm experience is not.

Product: Trees, beehives, animals (for rent)
Place: Mail order
Price: Premium
Promotion: Web site, brochures, catalog
Customers: Urban dwellers

3D Wines, a company in England, offers the public a chance to rent a row of grapevines from one of several top vineyards in France. Renting a row of grapevines gives customers the opportunity to purchase up to 4 cases of wine from their chosen vineyard at cost.

Any marketing strategy has advantages and disadvantages. Whether any of these direct marketing strategies is suitable for a particular situation depends on the size of the farm, the variety of crops grown, available labor, and farmer goals and personality. Many farmers use more than one marketing strategy simultaneously, and others use different strategies at different times.

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Niche markets

Niche markets target a specific customer base. While mass marketers aim to supply the largest possible number of customers with a product that everyone can use, niche marketers seek to supply a smaller number of customers with exactly the product they want. Consumer tastes and preferences are not uniform. The mass marketing approach overlooks these subtle differences in demand in order to gain the greatest number of customers. Of the millions of people that make up the mass market, many are not satisfied with what the market supplies. These purchasers provide an opportunity for the niche marketer (fig. 10). Discriminating consumers are willing to pay a premium for high quality products, hard to find or uncommon products, or products produced in an environmentally friendly way.

Niche markets can take several forms. Specialized ethnic foods are unique products that are not commonly found in mass-market grocery stores. Popular ethnic market items include herbs, seasonings, and cheeses—often hand-produced. Health conscious consumers also comprise a significant niche market opportunity for the producer. Products increasingly marketed to this group include such items as organic produce, organic or natural grass-fed beef, free-range poultry, and organic milk.

The most important step in niche marketing is research. Find out what people in the local area want. Next, determine if the number of customers is sufficient to make a particular product profitable. If so, then plot a strategy on how to produce the product(s) to meet their needs.

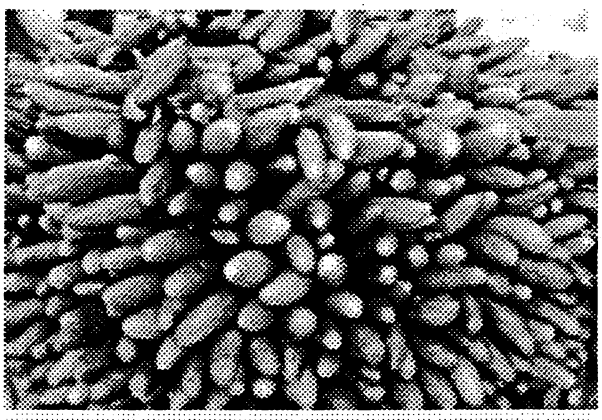

Figure 10 Niche markets provide products sought-after by a select group of customers willing to pay more for what they want. Japanese eggplant is highly prized in certain markets. (photo courtesy of USDA)

Case Example

Headwaters Petite Beef is a limited liability corporation started by the Hampshire County Cooperative in West Virginia to capture a niche market for environmentally and health conscious individuals who want tender, low fat, hormone- and antibiotic-free beef. Ten-month-old calves that weigh approximately 750 pounds are sold directly to supporters of the Cacapon Institute, a nonprofit, environmental organization dedicated to protecting Appalachian watersheds. These consumers want to feel that they are doing their part to help the local environment. Petit Beef allows them to contribute to the health of the Potomac River by supporting agriculture that uses environmentally sound management practices. They are willing to pay a premium price for a product they want produced in the manner they want.

Product: Hormone- and antibiotic-free, environmentally friendly beef
Place: Local pickup
Price: Premium retail
Promotion: Flyers, letters directed at target customers
Customers: Cacapon Institute (local environmental group)

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Public Relations and Marketing

Public relations and advertising are two aspects of **promotion** (the fourth **P** described in the section on marketing). No matter how good the product or service is or how needed it is, it will not sell if customers do not know about it. Public relations makes people aware of you and your farm operation. Advertising makes people aware of and sells your product or service. Both are powerful marketing tools (Thayer, 1996).

Public relations uses local media to publish or broadcast newsworthy information about you or your farm. It helps you gain credibility and visibility in your market at little or no personal cost. Advertising involves purchase of media time or space to draw favorable attention to the product or service you are selling. It can be effective, but also expensive and should be planned carefully to efficiently reach your target audience with a message that is memorable and attracts favorable attention to your product or service. Many references on public relations and advertising should be available through your local library. Two recently published books are *Feeding the Media Beast: An Easy Recipe for Great Publicity* by Mark Mathis and *Advertising: Ideas and Techniques from the World's Best Campaigns* by Mario Pricken.

For More Information

Some resources for farmers who want to learn more about innovative marketing for sustainable agriculture are listed in this section. An extensive list of resources is available in *Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism: Farming for Profit and Sustainability Toolkit* published by the USDA NRCS Resource Economics and Social Sciences Division and Resource Conservation and Community Development Division. The toolkit is on the Web page **http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise**, or it may be obtained by calling (202) 720-0132.

Direct marketing associations

Direct marketing associations provide many benefits to members including member and consumer directories, conferences, workshops, tours, newsletters, certification, insurance, and government relations. One of their main functions is to provide networking opportunities and marketing information to members. Currently, 41 farmers' market and direct farm marketing associations are active in the United States (USDA-Agricultural Marketing Service, 2001). One of the largest of these, the North American Farm Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA), was established to promote and foster "the growth of farm direct marketing by offering opportunities for education, networking, and fellowship to its members." For more information about NAFDMA, visit their Web site, **http://www.nafdma.com/**. NAFDMA encourages formation of regional and local associations. Farmers considering direct marketing strategies may want to become involved with one or more direct marketing associations.

Publications

Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises. Small Farms Series, Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Services, Cornell University, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853, telephone (607) 255-7654. This publication is written for families and individuals interested in developing a new farm-based enterprise and is especially helpful for those considering nontraditional enterprises. It is written as a workbook and has worksheets to evaluate family goals, alternative enterprises, marketing, production, profitability, financial feasibility, and decisionmaking. It also has an excellent list of resources.

Tilling the Soil Of Opportunity: Nx LeveL™ Guide for Agricultural Entrepreneurs. University of Nebraska, US WEST Foundation and SARE. Call 1-800-873-9378 or 1-800-328-2851 to find out where the next course will be held in your area. This training course was developed by more than 15 business writers, producers, and consultants involved in successful direct marketing agricultural businesses. It covers assessing your resources, business planning and research, marketing, business management, legal considerations, budgets, and financial management. During the course, each participant sets goals and objectives and prepares their own business plan. The goal is "Helping Producers Reach the Next Level of Success...."

Ca$hing in on Business Opportunities: A Guide to Building a Home-Based and Micro Business Program. Southern Rural Development Center, (601) 325-3207. This curriculum is designed for educators to use in working with home-based and micro businesses. The curriculum is comprehensive and covers a wide array of topics of interest to current or potential business owners. It can be used by educators or entrepreneurs. Overhead material and diskettes accompany the manual. It comes in two 4-inch binders.

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Ideas for Alternative Agricultural Enterprises. This 7-page fact sheet lists several alternative enterprise ideas and how they can be developed and has three pages on developing a business plan. Contact the Missouri Alternatives Center (573) 882-1905 or **http://www.agebb.missouri.edu/mac/** for a copy.

"Agritainment"—Farm & Ranch Recreation Resource Directory. North Dakota Extension Service. This notebook has information on creativity and quality, marketing strategies; feasibility cash flow; insurance; starting a business; North Dakota laws, regulations, and telephone numbers; home business ideas; grants; and resources. Contact Kathleen Tweeten, (701) 328-5134 or e-mail ktweeten@ndsuext.nodak.edu. Cost $25.00.

Reap New Profits: Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers. This PowerPoint presentation for educators on CD-ROM may be obtained through the Sustainable Agriculture Network Web site, **http://www.sare.org/htdocs/pubs/.**

The Feasibility of Agricultural Alternatives (Updated June 1996). Forrest Stegelin, Extension Agribusiness Economist, University of Kentucky, (606) 257-5762. This is an outline of what needs to be considered in developing an alternative enterprise. Twelve steps are presented in this detailed 11-page outline. Successes or failures in the farm business depend largely upon the soundness of managerial decisions.

Web sites

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise/ provides access to a 950-page resource manual on alternative enterprises and agritourism, information sheets, success stories, and resource people listed by state, region, and national.

http://www.attra.org/, Appropriate Technology Transfer For Rural Areas. This center has information on production and marketing of many products. The information is also available by calling 1-800-346-9140.

http://www.usda.gov/oce/smallfarm/sfhome.htm, Small Farms @USDA: Creating Opportunities, Preserving Choices. This USDA Web site has council information, a database, and lists of events and people.

http://www.sare.org, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. This site has information and links to information on a variety of topics related to sustainable agriculture, including the marketing aspects of sustainable agriculture.

http:/www.ssi.nrcs.usda.gov/ssi/ Natural Resources Conservation Service Social Sciences Institute. This site has a wealth of resources on many aspects of marketing and marketing research.

http://www.agebb.missouri.edu/mac, Missouri Alternatives Center. This University of Missouri Web site has alternative agriculture and agritourism publications, links, and mailing addresses. The information is also available by calling (314) 882-1905.

http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension. This Web site is one example of what is available at Land Grant Universities. Most Land Grant Universities devote some resources to alternative enterprise assistance/development and agritourism. Several states have special centers, institutes, or economic development devoted to work in these areas.

More case studies

The New American Farmer: Profiles of Agricultural Innovation was published by SARE. This publication documents a growing reality across the United States. It is stories about farmers raising and marketing crops and livestock differently. Case studies for 48 farm/ranch families are presented by the four SARE regions. For a free CD or copy, call (301) 504-6422, e-mail san@nal.usda.gov, or print it off the Web **http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic**.

Renewing the Countryside: Minnesota was published by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Great Plains Institute for Sustainable Development, and the Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership, University of Minnesota. It has 39 case studies that address sustainable farming, marketing, product innovations, harvesting nature, conservation, tourism and culture, and community. To obtain a copy, call (612) 870-3400, e-mail rtc@iatp, or go to **http://www.mncountryside.org**.

For several farmer/rancher success stories of alternative enterprises, agritourism, and conservation, go to **http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise/**.

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Case Studies

The case studies that follow represent farmers who have adopted different marketing strategies for different reasons.

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Case Study 4-1: Roy Milleson, Headwaters Petite Beef

Location
Hampshire County, West Virginia

Farm size
955 acres

Original strategy
Products: Traditional beef production
Marketing: Traditional outlets

New strategy
Products: Rotationally grazed, environmentally friendly, hormone-free beef, "Petit beef"
Marketing: Cooperative marketing through traditional outlets, cooperative marketing direct to consumer

Marketing issues
Transition to rotational grazing, cooperative participation, direct marketing, social issues

For more information
Steve Ritz, District Conservationist
500 E. Main St.
Romney, WV 26757

Site Description
Roy Milleson operates the 955-acre farm that has been in his family for three generations. The farm lies along the South Branch of the Potomac River near Romney, West Virginia. The topography on his farm is typical of farms along the South Branch. The narrow river bottoms grade into gentle hills and then into steep terrain. Much of the Milleson farm is woodland.

Objectives
Roy's main objective for the farm is efficiency. He wants to increase return and decrease workload and expenses. Roy plans to meet his objective by focusing on low-cost production and cost-efficient management.

Transition to Rotational Grazing
Roy Milleson took over operations of the Milleson farm from his father in 1990. He started out with beef and corn enterprises typical of farms in the area. An injury to his leg in 1996 and loss of the corn crop by two major floods forced Roy to reevaluate his operation. He analyzed the time and money that was involved with the corn and concluded that it was unprofitable. His focus then shifted to developing the pasture grazing system that his father had experimented with years ago.

Roy decided to move to a rotational grazing system for managing his cattle. Rotational grazing involves moving animals through a series of fields or paddocks on a regular basis. This system allows more animals to be grazed on the same acreage. By having all animals in the same paddock, the forage is consumed evenly over the entire paddock area. This means more consumption and more even utilization of forage. Once cattle have thoroughly grazed one paddock, they are moved to a new paddock with fresh grass. The previous paddock is allowed to "rest" until cattle come back to it in the rotation. By this time, the grass has regrown and is ready to graze. By varying the number and size of paddocks, farmers are better able to cope with seasonal differences in grass growth and prevent overgrazing. Key factors to successful rotational grazing are adequate fences and a good supply of water to all paddocks.

The transition sequence on the Milleson farm is still in process. Roy prioritized the sequence to meet the goal of becoming more efficient. First, he needed to improve his handling facilities. He noted, "$2,000 in facilities can save you $10,000 in medical bills." Next, he began fencing to make best use of the available water sources on the farm. Water in the drought-prone eastern panhandle of West Virginia is a limiting factor on many farms. Roy's focus has been diversifi-

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cation of water systems as insurance against drought. He believes that developing a variety of springs and ponds and using a high-pressure system of pipes will give him greater ability to cope with drought. With financial assistance provided by a USDA-sponsored drought relief effort, he has installed five watering troughs and 2,300 feet of water line.

Currently, the Milleson farm is a 90-cow/calf operation. They raise predominately Angus cattle to provide the market with the desired medium-frame calf. This year they will retain 20 heifers as replacement stock.

Cooperative Participation and Direct Marketing

Roy Milleson markets his beef through the Hampshire County Feeder Calf Producers Association, a home-grown farmer cooperative that developed out of an attempt to strengthen community interaction. Before entering the cooperative, the Milleson's sold their calves primarily through the local stockyards, although some direct sales were made from time to time. Now they strive to meet the cooperative's strict standards of size and quality.

One goal of the cooperative is to produce uniform cattle from different farms. All of the cooperative members use the same management practices with regards to feeding, vaccination, and weaning. All of the calves are weaned 45 days prior to sale. The cooperative also strives to maintain uniform calving and genetics for their respective herds. The group emphasizes safe, stress-free handling of the animals.

A second goal of the cooperative is to explore the opportunities for direct marketing the beef produced by cooperative members through a limited liability corporation called Headwaters Petite Beef. The development of a direct sales component along with the calf pool represents a two-phased approach to marketing. This will help the cooperative diversify and spread its risk.

Petite Beef is used to describe a 750-pound animal at 10 months of age. Because calves are young, the beef is naturally lean and tender. The calves are raised on grass, then marketed as naturally lean (less than 8 percent fat) and environmentally friendly. They are hormone and antibiotic free. Removing the calves early also reduces competition with the cows for late season pasture. This extends grazing time for the herd and reduces the cost of winter feed. Production costs are further cut by not having to purchase and administer expensive animal medications. Milleson's goal is to be able to gradually increase the number of calves he can market directly to the consumer as petite beef.

Social Issues

Direct marketing helps consumers understand where their food comes from, puts a face on the farmer, and helps bring the community closer together. This marketing strategy puts the environmental community and the farmers working together in a mutually beneficial partnership to improve the environment, help farmers improve their livelihood, and provide consumers with a superior agricultural product. Everyone in the Hampshire County Feeder Calf Producers Association is like-minded about environmental stewardship, and all want to see the Potomac Valley and their way of life protected for the future. Milleson is glad to be part of the process.

Conclusion

The marketing cooperative has provided many benefits to Roy Milleson. Through the cooperative Milleson has been able to improve both the quality of the cattle and the management thought processes involved in producing the cattle. "The positives went well beyond the price," says Milleson. Through the cooperative the local farmers have learned to work together. Roy notes, "Everybody has strong points in different areas that everybody else has been able to use." This cooperative effort, sharing of talents, and desire to see everyone who is involved benefit has enabled the members of cooperative to increase their profits and improve sustainability.

Local residents are concerned with protecting the rural landscape and the small family farm. Consumers are concerned with the environmental impacts of agriculture and with healthy food. The Headwaters Petite Beef project connects the concerns of the local consumers with local farmers who want to produce an environmentally friendly product in a sustainable manner. It helps to preserve the rural landscape and the family farm by making farms more profitable. It also meets the demands of the consumers to have healthy, and environmentally friendly products.

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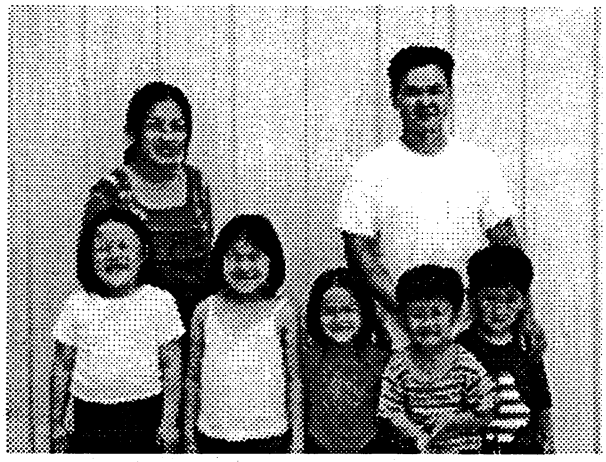
Case Study 4-2: Der Thao and Nikk Cha



Location
Dakota County, Minnesota

Farm size
65 acres (54 farmable)

Original strategy
Products: Cut flowers, vegetables
Marketing: Multiple farmers' markets

New strategy
Products: Cut flowers (medium bouquet), perennial flowers, woody floral products, fruits, berries
Marketing: Niche marketing at multiple farmers' markets

Marketing issues
Objectives, farmers' markets, customer relations, strategies

For more information
Dakota and Ramsey County Field Office
4100 220th St, W.
Farmington, MN 55024
(651) 463-8665

Site Description
Der Thao and Nikk Cha recently purchased a 65-acre farm in Dakota County, Minnesota, about 35 minutes south of St. Paul. Together with Der's parents, they grow a variety of vegetables and cut flowers, and they have plans to expand their enterprises to include fruit trees, berries, and perennial plants for floral arrangements.

The climate in Dakota County is characterized by cold winters and summers that are generally hot with occasional cool periods. Winter precipitation frequently occurs as snow. Summer precipitation occurs as sporadic showers and thunderstorms that are occasionally severe. The average low temperature in the winter is 7 degrees Fahrenheit, while the average summer high is 81 degrees Fahrenheit. About 70 percent of the annual precipitation (21 inches) falls during the growing season (April through September).

The dominant soils on the farm are loams belonging to the Lester, Le Sueur, and Cylinder series. Slopes range from 1 to 6 percent, though most of the land is less than 3 percent slope. Although some of the soils are somewhat poorly drained, most are moderately well drained to well drained, making them highly productive. Most have moderately slow permeability, moderate runoff, and a high available water holding capacity. Some have a seasonal high water table and are somewhat erosive. The soils are highly suited to crop production.

Der and Nikk feel lucky that they were able to purchase their farm, and they want to express thanks to Greg Bengold, Farm Services Agency loan officer, and Kham Yang, outreach coordinator for the Minnesota Food Project, for helping them achieve their dream of owning a farm.

Objectives
Both Der and Nikk love farming. "With farming," says Nikk, "the day is never so long that you have to look at your watch." It is also an occupation in which the entire family can participate and a way to keep the family together. Farming is in their blood. Both Nikk's and Der's parents farmed in Laos and Cambodia before coming to the United States. The family's objectives include maintaining and improving the farm, paying off the loan, and supporting the family through farming. They want to meet their economic objectives by growing quality flowers, vegetables, and perennial crops to meet the needs of their customers.

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Markets

Der and Nikk market their produce at several farmers' markets in the Twin Cities area. They sell produce on the weekends at the St. Paul farmers' market. Minneapolis has a farmers' market that is larger than the St. Paul market, but farmers at the Minneapolis farmers' market must compete for customers with wholesalers. At the St. Paul farmers' market, vendors are required to produce what they sell, so wholesalers are not allowed. During the week, Der, Nikk, and Der's parents sell produce at several smaller farmers' markets in and around St. Paul. After the markets close, the family returns to the farm to harvest the next day's produce.

Customers

The family has loyal customers at all their markets. Over time they have developed relationships with their customers. Der says they generally fall into two categories. The customers who come early are looking for quality. Those who come late are looking for bargains. The family can generally accommodate both types by lowering their price at the end of the day. This way they can sell all their produce each day, so produce is always fresh. The early customers can get the highest quality possible, and the late customers can get the bargain they want.

Customers can also be grouped according to vegetable preference, which is often correlated with ethnicity. The family has loyal customers among African Americans, Russians, various groups of Asians, and Anglo Americans. Greens are popular with all the groups, but hot peppers are a particular favorite with the African American customers. The family grows at least five kinds of eggplants, four kinds of peppers, and two kinds of daikon radish. Each kind is preferred by a different group of customers.

Dealing with customers involves more than monetary transactions. Many customers need to be educated about the produce for sale, how to cook it, and how to eat it. Once customers become familiar with the produce, they often come back for more.

Once a relationship has been established, customers often make suggestions for what vegetables they would like. Sometimes they bring seeds or plants for the family to try propagating. Each group of customers has its own shopping style also. Der and Nikk enjoy bargaining with their Russian customers. "They love to bargain, but they're fun," says Der.

Marketing Strategies

The family uses a variety of strategies to compete with the other vendors at the farmers' market. Cutting prices (except at the end of the day) is **not** one of them. "If you price too low," says Der, "you will make your neighbors unhappy and you won't necessarily sell more." A key in direct marketing is to find a niche. You need something that sets your product apart from the rest. Sell something others are not selling, sell it at a different time, or package it in a unique way. You also need to listen to your customers and find out what they want. Der competes with other flower growers by making small bouquets for her customers. Her competitors generally sell either single flowers or large bouquets. Der's bouquets meet the needs of customers who only want a few, pre-selected flowers.

Der is planning to grow more perennials in the future as a way of getting an edge on the market. Perennials are not as common at the farmers' markets because they require more time to grow, and many farmers cannot afford to wait multiple years for a crop. Now that they own their own land, however, Der and Nikk are in a good position to grow perennials to fill a customer's needs that others cannot fill.

A third marketing strategy the family uses is listening to buyers. They try to grow what will sell. When they try growing a new type of vegetable or flower, they offer free samples to their customers and educate them about the vegetable. Mainly, though, they try to grow what they know will sell or what they think will sell based on past experience. "Growing the wrong thing can cost you a lot of time," says Der.

Their marketing advice to others: "Stay focused. Keep your eyes open for what is selling best, but don't try to compete with others. You can grow the same thing, but grow it at a different time to avoid competition."

DRAFT

Case Study 4-3: Gizdich Ranch

Location
Santa Cruz County, California

Farm size:
89 acres

Original strategy
Products: Tomatoes, boysenberries, apples
Marketing: Traditional outlets

New strategy (gradual process)
Products: Berries, berry products (jams, jellies, juice, apple pies, pumpkins, antiques, gift shop
Marketing: U-pick, on-farm sales, on-farm tours, special events

Marketing issues
Advertising, community involvement, listening to customers, other markets, challenges

For more information
Jeff Rodriguez
RC&D Coordinator
Central Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council
545 Main Street, Suite B-1
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(805) 772-5623

Site Description and History
Nita Gizdich works on an 89-acre ranch near Watsonville, California. The farm has been in the family for 69 years. Her grandchildren are the fourth generation to live there. Her son, Vince Gizdich, took over the farm operation 7 years ago, but Nita still manages the marketing.

Gizdich Ranch lies at the base of the California coastal range foothills. The soils are nearly level to gently sloping loams formed on alluvial fans and terraces. With proper water and fertility management, they can be highly productive (USDA SCS, 1979). The climate in Santa Cruz County is characterized by warm summers and mild winters. Mean summer high temperature is often more than 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Winter minimum temperatures average 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit. The average annual precipitation is about 20 to 25 inches. Snowfall is extremely rare. This area is good for growing apples.

The farm originally produced tomatoes, boysenberries, and apples, but in 1950, when the ollalie berry (a hybrid blackberry) was introduced to California, the Gidzich family replaced their tomatoes with ollalies. They sold ollalies to wholesale processors for several years until the market dried up in the late 1950's. Faced with a large crop and nowhere to sell it, they decided to start a U-pick business. That business has now grown to a multiple-enterprise, entertainment farm that employs 28 full-time and as many as 70 seasonal employees.

To advertise their new U-pick business in 1950, the Gizcich's placed a sign by the highway that read **PicYurSef Ollalies**. They got only a few customers. One day a woman showed up wanting to know what ollalies were. When she found out they were blackberries, she was delighted and said she would have been there much sooner if she had known. When Nita and her husband changed the sign to read, **PicYurSef Blackberries (Ollalies)**, business started to improve. Berry picking lasted through June. Visitors to the farm found they could also purchase two varieties of prepicked apples in September, so some returned for the apple harvest. Based on customers' requests, the Gizdich's gradually replaced some of their existing pippin apples with more popular varieties. They replaced some ollalies with other types of berries. They also sold fresh squeezed apple juice and apple pies. Then they started an antique store and later a gift shop.

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Advertising

Advertising is a critical part of marketing. Nita approaches advertising from many angles. "Some of the best advertising is by word-of-mouth," she says, "but that is not enough." She sends out notices to former customers twice a year and advertises in the newspaper. She is always looking for free sources of advertising and seldom turns down an opportunity to speak about farming or demonstrate how to make apple pies. If something new is happening at the farm, she'll send news releases to TV stations, radio stations, and newspapers, and often they will pick up the story. The farm has been highlighted in several television shows and magazines. All of this advertising has resulted in expansion of farm income-producing activities. For example, Nita hosts farm tours for school children and senior groups. The farm also holds a successful Apple Butter Festival in October. Families come from great distances to taste fresh apple butter, purchase crafts, and participate in a barbecue and other family activities.

Community Involvement

Nita says, "Being active in your community is an important part of marketing." She participates actively in a number of organizations including the local chamber of commerce, the Farm Bureau, and the Roadside Direct Marketers' Association. She makes presentations and gives farm tours whenever they are requested. She has even had tour groups from Japan. Farm tours are particularly intense during the autumn. For 2 months, every weekday morning is devoted to school tours and every afternoon to adult tours. Nita speaks at local clubs and is involved in many activities that contribute to the community. "Not only is it being a good neighbor, it's good advertising too," says Nita.

Listening to Customers

Listening to customers is the primary reason that the farm has evolved to the enterprise it is today. Customers requested new apple varieties and more types of berries. The Gizdichs listened. They have 13 varieties of apples and 4 kinds of berries for sale. Customers asked to buy antique items from around the farm. They listened again, and the antique store was established. Customers wanted to buy gifts in addition to fruit so they opened a gift shop. One customer asked to have a birthday party at the farm. Now it is a regular offering where a picnic table is reserved and the birthday person gets a personalized birthday apple pie. "To be successful you need to give customers what they want," says Nita. "This means you must listen and respond."

Other Markets

Although most of the farm income comes from onfarm sales, the Gizdich family produces more fruit than they can sell to onfarm customers. So they also deliver apples, apple juice, apple pies, jams, jellies, and syrup to restaurants and independent groceries from Palo Alto to the Carmel Valley. They maintain a consistent product line; that is, they do not produce anything different specifically for off-farm sales. They simply sell off-farm products at wholesale prices, while the onfarm products are retail.

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges Nita faces is coordinating visitors. It is important that individual visitors to the farm not feel overcrowded by bus tours, so the groups are always separated. Even farm store sales to tour groups occur in a separate location from the main farm store that serves individuals. Nita also is careful to not double-book farm tours. That way she ensures each tour gets individual attention.

Nita suggests several reasons why more farmers are not interested in onfarm, direct marketing. Insurance for such operations is quite high, permits are also expensive, and this kind of operation requires that a number of people be available to assist visitors. This means that not everyone can be in the field. Someone needs to "mind the store." One of the biggest issues is personality, though. "You have to like people," says Nita. "If you don't have a people-oriented personality, it won't work."

You also have to recognize that it takes time to build a customer base and be able to sustain the operation while the base is building. The first year of their U-pick operation, Gizdich Ranch had no more than 50 visitors all season. Now they can have as many as 300 visitors a day.

Summary

Gizdich Ranch has been a family farm for 69 years and has included a U-pick operation for over 40 years. The farm and its enterprises have evolved as a result of responding to customer feedback. Nita Gizdich believes that advertising, listening to customers, and making customers feel welcome are three critical elements in a successful onfarm sales operation, and by almost any measure, Gizdich Ranch is very successful.

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Case Study 4-4: Common Good Farm *(formerly Equinox Community Supported Agriculture)*

Location
Raymond, Nebraska

Farm size
2 to 3 acres (in production)

Original strategy
Products: Vegetables, pasture poultry
Marketing: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farmers' markets

New strategy
Products: Vegetables (49+ kinds), herbs, pasture poultry, eggs, fruits/nuts
Marketing: Community Supported Agriculture

Marketing issues
How the CSA works, cultural methods, community support, customer focus, advertising, limitations

For more information
Dennis Schroeder
6030 South 58th St., Suite C
Lincoln, NE 68516
(402) 423-9683, ext. 5

Site Description
Ruth Chantry and Evrett Lunquist, with their two children Quin (12) and Eli (4), run the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) at Common Good Farm near Raymond, Nebraska, 15 miles north of Lincoln. In 1996, they started their CSA 5 miles south of Lincoln in response to local interest. After borrowing land for 3 years, the family bought a 20-acre parcel near Raymond in 1999 and moved the CSA officially to Raymond in 2000.

Common Good Farm is located on rolling terrain. Slopes range from nearly level to 8 percent. The soils are predominantly in the Sharpsburg series. Sharpsburg soil is relatively fine-textured and fertile. This soil's greatest limitations are slow permeability and a tendency to erode if not managed properly. Only 2 to 3 acres are flat enough for vegetable production. The remainder is primarily in bromegrass, clovers, and natural vegetation of prairie grasses and riparian woodland. The family has plans to convert some of these areas to perennial fruit and flower production.

The climate near Raymond, Nebraska, is cold in the winter and hot with occasional cooler spells in the summer. Winter precipitation usually occurs as snow. The average annual precipitation is about 30 inches. Approximately 70 percent of this falls during the growing season (from April through November). However, precipitation varies significantly from year to year. Two years out of 10, the growing season precipitation is less than 19 inches. Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms strike occasionally in the spring and summer, causing localized crop damage.

Background/Goals
Ruth and Evrett have been managing the CSA in Nebraska for 5 years. While neither of them grew up on a farm, both had a keen interest in farming. Before starting out on their own, they worked on a CSA in Wisconsin for 2 years, learning as much as they could about production techniques and how to conduct a CSA. Evrett knew he wanted to produce food in a way that supported the economics of food and farming. He and Ruth recognized that culture is intricately tied with food. Farmers are stewards of not only the land, but of the community around them. Agribusiness produces food, but often destroys the culture/community around it by consolidating farms and displacing farmers. Evrett and Ruth wanted to grow food and foster the cultural elements of community as well. Starting the CSA was a way to bring them toward their goal.

How the CSA Works
Common Good Farm is set up so that individual members pledge annually to pay a share of the economic needs of the farm and in return receive a share of the season's harvest. Shareholders pick up their produce weekly from one of two dropoff points in Lincoln or from the farm itself. Food is delivered weekly for about 25 weeks, from May through November, depending on the growing season. An early hard freeze can shorten the delivery period. Over 40 crops are produced in season. Early crops include (but are not limited to) head lettuce, chard, snow peas, scallions, spinach, Chinese cabbage, baby turnips, and radishes. Mid-season crops may include carrots, onions, summer squash, tomatoes, cucumbers, beets, beans, eggplants, peppers, sweet corn, melons, cauliflower, broccoli, and herbs. Typical late season vegetables include cabbage, potatoes, lettuce, winter squash, rutabaga, parsnips, leeks, onions, garlic, and kale. Pastured poultry broilers and eggs are sold separately from the CSA share, but can be ordered by CSA members.

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Cultural Methods
Common Good Farm is certified "In Conversion to Biodynamic," which meets all organic standards with some additional requirements. Only 45 fully certified biodynamic farms are in the United States. Biodynamic farming goes a step beyond organic farming in that it incorporates whole-farm nutrient cycling into the nonchemical concept of organic farming. While organic farming strives to improve and not degrade the soil, the goal of biodynamic farming is to improve the soil, plant, and animal resources, paying particular attention to the living nature of the farm to be environmentally sustainable.

Biodynamic certification may eventually allow Common Good Farm to charge a higher premium than organic farms for its produce. Currently, it serves as a tangible demonstration of Ruth and Evrett's commitment as stewards of the land and our food system.

Community Support
Ruth and Evrett receive information and moral support for their efforts from a number of sources. Two of their greatest supporters are the local Mennonite church and the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society (NSAS). When they have questions or need help, usually someone from one of these organizations can help them or lead them to someone who can.

One of Ruth and Evrett's goals is to use their operation to give back to the community as well. They have donated food to local shelters, hosted school groups and scout troops to the farm, and held seasonal festivals for members and the community. Common Good Farm hosts several potluck dinners throughout the season to give members an opportunity to get to know each other and the farm.

Consumer Focus
A major focus of the CSA is educating customers about food production and utilization. Many people are not familiar with the seasonal nature of produce. For example, in Nebraska snow peas and sweet corn ripen at different times, so using both in the same recipe is impractical. Customers often need to learn how to prepare unfamiliar produce, too.

At the end of each season, customers are asked to fill out a survey asking them which vegetables they would have liked more of, which they could have used less of, which vegetables they missed having, and what could have been done differently to meet their needs. The information from the survey is used to plan the next year's crops.

Advertising
One of the challenges Ruth and Evrett face each year is getting the word out to the public about the CSA. While the local farmers' market is popular, CSAs are a relatively new concept. A 50 percent return rate is typical for CSAs as a whole. Common Good Farm's retention rate fluctuates from 50 to 75 percent, sometimes higher. Some members have difficulty adjusting to using seasonally available produce in the quantities provided rather than selecting their own produce, and others have life changes that preclude their returning. One way Ruth and Evrett advertise is by selling extra produce at the farmers' market so they can talk to customers who visit their booth about the CSA and hand out brochures to interested people. They have used free advertising on a local radio station, made presentations at the local library, and had a table at the Earth Day Festival, but it all takes time.

Limitations
Time—Time is currently the greatest limiting factor on Common Good Farm. Except during workdays, which tend to involve only a fraction of the CSA members, Ruth and Evrett provide all the farm labor. They have had interns in the past and found that training them was sometimes more time-consuming than doing the work themselves. The minimal stipend interns receive also limits the number of interested and qualified applicants. Marketing is also quite time-consuming, so downtime is hard to come by.

Land—Another limitation on Common Good Farm is the amount of level land available for intensive vegetable production. Much of the farm is too steep to till without risking serious erosion. Ruth and Evrett are planning to utilize some of the sloping areas by planting perennial fruits such as apples, grapes, pears, raspberries and strawberries, as well as perennial flowers and rhubarb. Still the limited space will limit the number of shares they can sell.

Financial resources—Limited time and limited space could easily be overcome with unlimited financial resources. Still, Ruth and Evrett continue to develop an environmentally friendly farm and are providing a valuable community service with the resources they have.

Conclusion
The CSA started in 1996 provides many elements of sustainable agriculture. It supports the family farm while providing members with nutritious seasonal food. It also gives members an opportunity to learn how their food is produced and to develop a sense of community with other members and with the farmers who produce the food. As Evrett says, "The CSA is a way to put *culture* back into agriculture."

DRAFT

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by Eric Gibson

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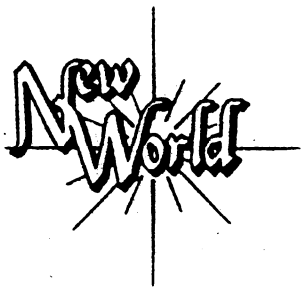

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Capital Press
March 29, 2002

Cowboy Logic

Ryan Taylor

Marketing 101: Cattlemen as salesmen, not!

You know you're in trouble when you refer to your annual marketing effort with something like, "Yup, we finally got rid of them."

I don't think I've ever walked into a really nice, high-end store and had the salesman say, "Would you like to buy our stuff? We're tired of walking around these things and we really need to get rid of them."

Very few of the sales people in those stores have ever told me, "The bottom's about to fall out of the market for this stuff. I was hoping to dump it on you this week to cut my losses."

And even fewer would tell me, "Our high-quality brand-name stuff is better than the bins of crap at the discount store, but we'll take whatever price you're willing to pay over there."

But that's kind of how I market my cattle.

SELLING SKILLS

Every year for the past three, I've been a guest lecturer for the ag sales class at North Dakota State University.

It's pretty refreshing to be around a bunch of young people on a college campus. I can see why professors enjoy their jobs. Being surrounded by all that youth and enthusiasm keeps them going.

Not many people like to admit to being a salesman, but I've proudly sold a lot of things — animal pharmaceuticals, stock shares, books on cowboy logic, stories, speeches, raffle tickets and FFA fund-raising fruit. Nobody in this world has a job — those who build, those who entertain, those collecting a taxpayer's paycheck — until somebody sells something.

So I gladly go to NDSU to talk to students about the sales process.

We talk about how to approach customers, how to position a product's features and benefits, how to lead them to a decision to buy that product. We talk about handling objections, working with different personality types, and serving the marketplace with respect, integrity and good old-fashioned niceness.

And I try to practice what I preach, except, it seems, when I'm selling cattle.

DUMPING TIME

I usually market calves based on careful research. Like, "This is when we always sell them." Or I might sell them when we get short of feed, or when we just get tired of feeding them. Or when I think we've finally reached the bottom of the market.

And selling cattle isn't like selling anything else. We don't spend a lot of time positioning those cattle with the customer. Usually we try to get someone else between us and our customer and keep everything a secret.

We spend a lot of money on genetics, feeding programs and health programs, and we try to treat and handle them right, but we're too modest to make a big deal of it when we're selling them. Our main feature is that they're for sale, and its main benefit is that you can buy them for whatever you think they're worth.

We handle objections like rat tails, unpopular hide colors and frozen ears by letting them lower the price.

And we don't have to worry about dealing with a bunch of different personality types. There's just one personality, including ours, and that's greedy.

Despite my greed, I was able to hit a really nice dip in the market. Now it's gone down even more. Maybe next year with a little better timing I can hit the very bottom.

Or maybe next year, I can use some of the sales skills I taught the students.

But for this year, at least we got rid of them!

Ryan Taylor is a fourth-generation cattle rancher and writer from Towner, N.D. For details on his book, "A Collection of Cowboy Logic," send e-mail to cowlogic@ndak.net, fax (701) 537-5661 or write to: Ryan Taylor, 5435 N.E. 13th Ave., Towner, N.D. 58788.

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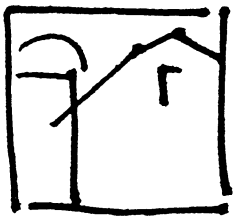

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National Agricultural Library Cataloging Record:

Gold, Mary V.
Direct marketing and related topics : January 1991-December 1996.
(Quick bibliography series ; 97-02)
1. Farms--Marketing--Bibliography. 2. Direct marketing--Bibliography.
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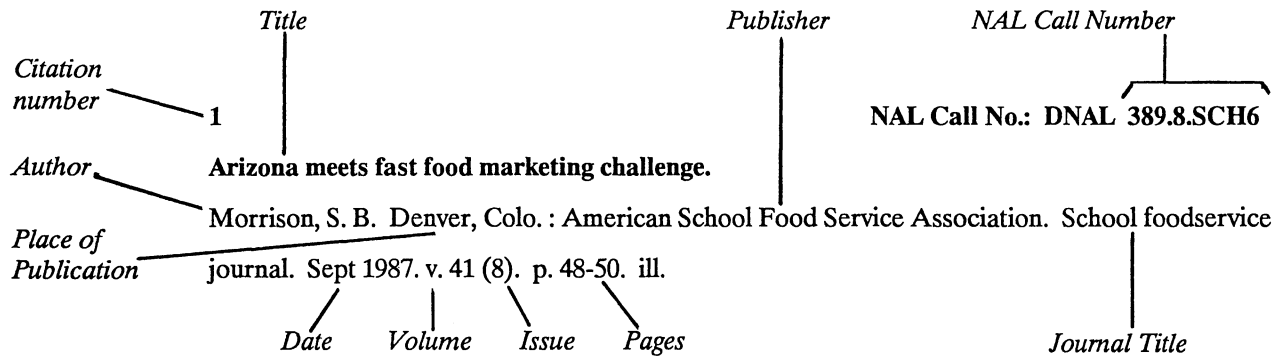

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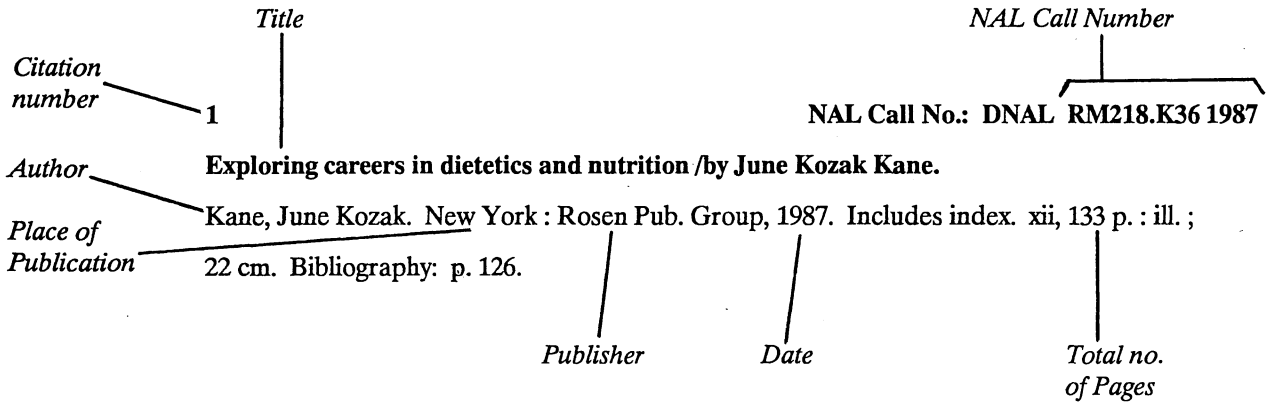

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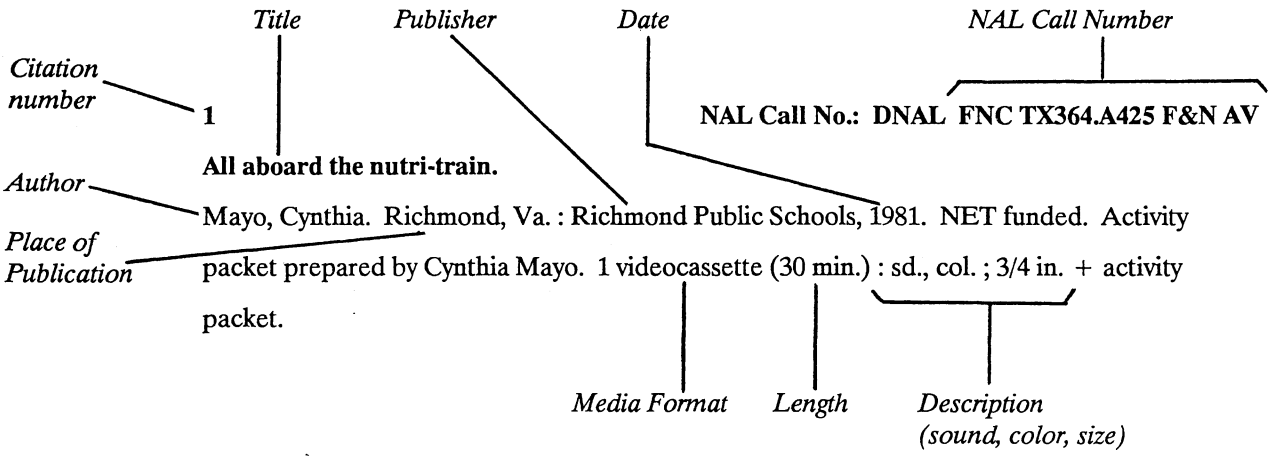

Direct Marketing and Related Topics: Search Strategy

1. ((MARKET* or SELL*) near (DIRECT or DIRECTLY))TI,DE,ID
2. (FARM DIRECT)TI,DE,ID
3. (((FARM PRODUCE) or (PRODUCE TRADE) or (MARKET* COOP*)) and ((SMALL FARM*) or (FAMILY FARM*) or BACKYARD or GARDEN*))TI,DE,ID
4. (MARKET* CLUB*)TI,DE,ID
5. (NICHE near MARKET*)TI,DE,ID
6. (((FARM* or RANCH* or (AGRICULTURAL LAND)) with TOURIS*) or (AGRITOURIS*)) TI,DE,ID
7. ((U PICK) or UPICK or PYO or (PICK YOUR OWN))TI,DE,ID
8. (MARKET* and (ROADSIDE or (MAIL ORDER*) or (SMALL FARMS) or (FAMILY FARM*)))TI,DE,ID
9. ((COMMUNITY SUPPORTED) near (AGRICULTURE or FARM*))TI,DE,ID
10. ((FARM* or RANCH*) with ((MAIL ORDER*) or RECREATION* or HUNTING or FISHING or HALLOWEEN))TI,DE,ID
11. (FARM HOLIDAY*)TI,DE,ID
12. (BED BREAKFAST)TI,DE,ID
13. ((FARM* or RANCH*) with (RESTAURANT* or (FOOD SERVICE*)))TI,DE,ID
14. ((FARM* or RANCH*) and ((ANCILLARY ENTERPRISE*) or (VALUE ADDED)))TI,DE,ID
15. ((MARKET* or BUSINESS*) and (INTERNET or (WORLD WIDE WEB)))TI,DE,ID
16. ((HOME near3 BUSINESS*) and (MARKET* or ENTERPRISE*))TI,DE,ID
17. (FARMERS MARKET*)TI,DE,ID
18. (MARKET* near1 ALTERNATIVE)TI,DE,ID
19. #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18
20. #19 and LA=ENGLISH (Language)
21. #20 and PY=1991-1996 (Year of publication)

Direct Marketing and Related Topics

1. **NAL Call No.: HD1773.A2N6**
Agricultural adaptation to urbanization: farm types in northeast metropolitan areas.
Heimlich, R. E.; Barnard, C. H. *Northeast-J-Agric-Resour-Econ* v.21(1): p. 50-60. (1992 Apr.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: agricultural-adjustment; urbanization; farm-enterprises; land-use; traditional-farming; urban-areas; rural-areas; farm-comparisons; farm- income; assets returns; production-costs; productivity; northeastern-states-of-usa; recreational-farming; adaptive-farming

2. **NAL Call No.: GV182.15.H562--1993**
Agritourism in New York State : opportunities and challenges in farm-based recreation and hospitality. Opportunities and challenges in farm-based recreation and hospitality.
Hilchey, D. 2nd ed. Nov. 1993. 1 v. (various pagings) : ill., maps. (Farming Alternatives Program, Dept. of Rural Sociology, Cornell University, [New York] , 1993)
Cover title.
Descriptors: land-use,-rural-economic-aspects-new-york-state; tourist-trade-economic-aspects-new-york-state

3. **NAL Call No.: TX1.H63**
Alaskan direct-market consumers: perception of organic produce.
Swanson, R. B.; Lewis, C. E. Home-econ-res-j. v.22(2): p.138-155. (1993 Dec.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: organic-foods; consumer-preferences; dietary-surveys; market-surveys
Abstract: Perception of organic produce among Alaskan direct-market patrons (N = 417) was examined in a mailed survey. Response rate was 80%. Response frequency was tabulated, and relationships were delineated using chi-square analysis. Healthfulness of the food supply was a concern, despite a perception that quality and healthfulness of the food supply had improved since 1987. These attributes were also important in fresh produce selection. Organic produce preference was related to both environmental and personal-safety concerns. More than half of these consumers had purchased organic produce within the last year; supermarkets and direct markets were the primary sources. Although organic produce was not purchased exclusively, previous purchase increased the likelihood of future purchase. A certification process was desired. Half preferred a government certification agent; 28% preferred public and private sector involvement. Information dissemination should address (a) pesticide use for cosmetic purposes, b) appearance and food safety, (c) flavor and shipping characteristics, and (d) production method and nutritive content.

4. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
All natural soap at Evening Shade Farms.
Berg, P. Small-farm-today. v.11(3): p.52-54. (1994 June)
Descriptors: soaps; manufacture; small-farms; ancillary-enterprises

5. **NAL Call No.: S494.5.A65A473--1993**
Alternative agricultural enterprises : production, management & marketing.
University of Idaho. College of Agriculture. 1 v. (loose-leaf) (University of Idaho, College of Agriculture : Cooperative Extension System : Agricultural Experiment Station, [Moscow, Idaho] , [1993])
Cover title. Minnesota."
Descriptors: alternative-agriculture-economic-aspects-idaho; entrepreneurship-idaho

6. **NAL Call No.: 290.9-Am32P**
Alternative marketing methods for U.S. flue-cured tobacco.
Donahue, D. W.; Sowell, R. S. Pap-Am-Soc-Agric-Eng. St. Joseph, Mich. : American Society of Agricultural Engineers. #917039: p.15 (1991 Summer)
Paper presented at the "1991 International Summer Meeting sponsored by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers," June 23-26, 1991, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
Descriptors: tobacco; marketing; computers; simulation

7. **NAL Call No.: S37.F72**
Aquaculture alternatives in Arkansas.
Stone, N.; Gray, D. L. FSA-Univ-Ark-Syst-Coop-Ext-Serv. [Little Rock, Ark.] : Cooperative Extension Service.. #9055: p.3 (1991 July)
Descriptors: fish-farming; ancillary-enterprises; fish-culture; regulations; arkansas; fish-culture-systems

8. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Assessing/evaluating/improving your potential from wildlife.
Byford, J. L. R-D-West-Va-Univ-Ext-Serv. Morgantown, W.Va. : The Service. #.750: p.23 ([1993?])
In subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Fish and Wildlife Management: Evaluating Habitat.
Descriptors: wildlife-management; farm-income; fees; hunting; habitats; cost-benefit-analysis; usa

9. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.O5O5**
Assessing group marketing alternatives for livestock.
Ward, C. E.; Bliss, T. J. OSU-Ext-Facts-Coop-Ext-Serv-Okla-State-Univ. Stillwater, Okla. : The Service.. #525: p.6 (1992 Feb.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: livestock; cooperative-marketing; telecommunications; oklahoma

10. **NAL Call No.: HD62.5.A98-1991**
Automate your business plan. Version 4.0. Anatomy of a business plan. [Computer program] 1991.
Title from disk label.
Productivity software for small business.
Descriptors: new-business-enterprises-planning-software/ small-business-planning-software/ home-based-businesses-planning-software

11. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Back Roads Adventures: a private enterprise model for nature study on private and public land.
Elkinton, L. C. RD. (769): p.12-17. ([1993?])
In subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Producers' Experiences: Deer Hunting, Tree Farming, Operating a Hunting Lodge, and Back Road Adventures.
Descriptors: farm-income; recreation; crafts; wildlife; finance; resource-management; west-virginia

12. **NAL Call No.: SB324.3.L44-1993**
Backyard market gardening : the entrepreneur's guide to selling what you grow.
Lee, A. W.; DeVault, G. 351p. (Good Earth Publications, Burlington, Vt., 1993)
Includes bibliographical references (p. 344-346) and index.
Descriptors: truck-farming; organic-farming; fruit-culture; vegetables-united-states-marketing; fruit-united-states-marketing; new-business-enterprises-united-states; small-business-united-states

13. **NAL Call No.: HD9225.A2V35-1992**
Basic formula to create community supported agriculture. Community supported agriculture.
Van En, R. 1 v. (unpaged) (R. Van En, Great Barrington, Mass. [1992])
Cover title.
Descriptors: vegetable-trade; consumer-cooperatives; agriculture,-cooperative; alternative-agriculture; truck-farming

14. **NAL Call No.: S522.U5H37**
The big show in big valley.
Fergus, C. Harrowsmith-ctry-life. v.10(59): p.20-23. (1995 Oct.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; rural-communities; pennsylvania

15. **NAL Call No.: HD2346.U5R8**
Boosting produce sales with speciality brokers.
Gibson, E. Rural-Enterp. v.6(3): p.3-5. (1992 Spring)
Descriptors: vegetables; fresh-products; direct-marketing; wholesale-marketing; specialization; food-marketing

Direct Marketing and Related Topics

16. **NAL Call No.: SB249.N6**
A brief overview of naturally colored and organically grown niche cottons: production, marketing, processing, retailing.
Apodaca, J. K. *Proc-Beltwide-Cotton-Conf. Memphis, Tenn. : National Cotton Council of America..* v.3: p.1403-1407 (1993)
Meeting held January 10-14, 1993, New Orleans, Louisiana.
Descriptors: gossypium; color; organic-farming; crop-production; retail-marketing; processing; natural-fibers

17. **NAL Call No.: SB457.3.F76--1993**
Case studies of entrepreneurial community greening projects.
Frohardt, K.-E. 14p. (American Community Gardening Assn., [Philadelphia PA], [1993])
Descriptors: community-gardens-economic aspects-united-states-case-studies; farm-produce-united-states-marketing-case-studies

18. **NAL Call No.: HD9007.M5F75--1995**
Celebrate the harvests! : Michigan farm markets, farm stands, and harvest festivals.
Frisch, D. 1.; Frisch, N. 1. xiv, 191p. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1995)
Includes index.
Descriptors: farm-produce-michigan-marketing; farmers'-markets-michigan

19. **NAL Call No.: LC45.4.J682**
Characteristics of farmer-to-consumer direct market customers: an overview.
Govindasamy, R.; Nayga, R. M. Jr. *Journal of Extension (Online)* v.34 (4): p.n/a (1996 Aug.)
Access info: http://joe.org/joe/
Descriptors: direct-marketing; consumer-attitudes; new-jersey

20. **NAL Call No.: aHD1751.A42**
A close-up of changes in farm organization.
Hoppe, R. A. *Agric-outlook.* (227): p.2-4. (1996 Mar.)
Descriptors: family-farms; agricultural-production; marketing; companies; usa; nonfamily-farms

21. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Clubs: an income producing option for recreational access.
Frantz, L.; Bromley, P. T. *RD.* (755): p.8-12. (1993?)
In subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Business Management and Marketing: Recreational Clubs.
Descriptors: private-ownership; gliding; hunting; recreation; farm-income; leases; virginia

22. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.A2C47**
Commercial production: strawberry.
Himelrick, D. G.; Powell, A. A.; Dozier, W. A. Jr. *Circ-ANR. [Auburn] Ala. : Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University.* #633, rev.: p.24 (1994 May)
Includes references.
Descriptors: fragaria-ananassa; crop-production; farmers'-markets; plant-anatomy; cultivars; weed-control; insect-pests; fungal-diseases; postharvest- treatment; crop-quality; alabama

23. **NAL Call No.: TX341.C6**
Community farming unites farmers & consumers.
Nutr-Week. v.22(41): p.4-5. (1992 Oct.)
Descriptors: farmers; consumers; community-involvement; usa; community-supported-agriculture

24. **NAL Call No.: HD1476.U52C27**
Community supported agriculture.
Gibson, E. *Small-farm-news. Davis, Calif. : U.C.D. Small Farm Center.* p.1, 3-4 (1993 Nov.-1993 Dec.)
Descriptors: community-involvement; support-systems; family-farms

25. **NAL Call No.: S494.5.A65C65--1993**
Community Supported Agriculture Conference : University of California, Davis, December 6, 1993.
Cohn, G.; Community Supported Agriculture Conference (1993 : University of California, Davis. 1 v. (various pagings) ill. (Small Farm Center, [Davis, CA] , 1994?)

Cover title.
Descriptors: alternative-agriculture-congresses; agriculture,-cooperative-congresses

26. **NAL Call No.: SB321.G85**
Community supported agriculture: connecting consumers and farms.
Grubinger, V. *Grower. Storrs, Conn. : Cooperative Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, The University of Connecticut.* v.93 (11): p.6-7 (1993 Nov.)
Descriptors: subsistence-farming; community-involvement

27. **NAL Call No.: aZ5073.A37**
Community supported agriculture (CSA): an annotated bibliography and resource guide.
DeMuth, S. *Agri-top. Beltsville, Md. : National Agricultural Library.* AT-93-02: 13p. (1993 Sept.)
Descriptors: agriculture; farming; community-involvement; support-systems; social-participation; food-production; bibliographies; usa

28. **NAL Call No.: HD3271.S87-1992**
Community supported agriculture in Massachusetts : status, benefits, and barriers.
Suput, D. 88p. (Tufts University, [S.l.], [1992])
Cover title.
Descriptors: agriculture,-cooperative-massachusetts; sustainable-agriculture-massachusetts

29. **NAL Call No.: S494.5.A65C66--1995**
Community supported agriculture --making the connection : a 1995 handbook for producers.
University of California (System). Cooperative Extension. Placer County. 1 v. (loose-leaf) (University of California Cooperative Extension, Placer County; Small Farm Center, University of California, Auburn, Calif.; Davis, Calif. 1995-)
Includes bibliographical references.
Descriptors: alternative-agriculture-handbooks,-manuals,-etc; farms,-small-handbooks,-manuals,-etc; producer-cooperatives-handbooks,-manuals,- etc

30. **NAL Call No.: 100-T25F**
Consumers' perceptions and attitudes regarding Tennessee's new farmers' markets.
Brooker, J. R.; Eastwood, D. B.; Gray, M. D. *Tenn-farm-home-sci.* (168): p.14-19. (1993 Fall)
Includes references.
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; consumers; demography; consumer-attitudes; consumer-surveys; tennessee

31. **NAL Call No.: SB321.G85**
Critique checklist for a roadside market.
Seavey, D.; Wells, O. *Grower. Storrs, Conn. : Cooperative Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, The University of Connecticut.* v.94 (9): p.2-3 (1994 Sept.)
Descriptors: markets; roadsides; customer-relations; layout; equipment; displays; prices; packaging; personnel

32. **NAL Call No.: HD1491.A3C82-1991**
CSA's community supported agriculture : an alternative enterprise guidebook.
Harlem Valley Planning Partnership. 21p. (The Associates, [Fairfield, Vt.] , 1991)
Cover title.
Descriptors: agriculture,-cooperative-guidebooks; agriculture-economic-aspects-guidebooks; farm-management-guidebooks

33. **NAL Call No.: 100-C12CAG**
Culinary herb use in southern California restaurants.
Brown, S. H. *Calif-Agric.* v.45(1): p.4-6. ill. (1991 Jan.-1991 Feb.)
Descriptors: culinary-herbs; restaurants; direct-marketing; california

34. **NAL Call No.: S1.N32**
Cultivating customers: here's why 100,000 of them shop at this diversified farm every year.
Cicero, K. *New-farm.* v.16(5): p.26, 28-30, 44. (1994 July-1994 Aug.)
Descriptors: family-farms; farm-enterprises; marketing

Direct Marketing and Related Topics

35. **NAL Call No.: S605.5.D33--1991**
D.C. and Baltimore area organic farmers directory : where to buy the freshest, tastiest, healthiest food : U-picks, farmer's markets, food co- ops, health food stores, lawn care alternatives, gardening supplies and services, state organic certification programs. Organic farmers directory.
Capital Coalition for Safe Food (Washington, D. C. 48 p. (The Coalition, Silver Spring, MD , [1991])
Cover title.
Descriptors: organic-farming-washington-d.c.; directories; organic-farming-virginia-directories; organic-farming-maryland-directories; organic-farming-pennsylvania-directories; organic-farming-west-virginia-directories

36. **NAL Call No.: HC106.8.E25**
A dairy attraction program: an example of economic development recruitment.
Parks, W. *Econ-Dev-Rev.* v.10(4): p.34-37. (1992 Fall)
Descriptors: dairy-farms; family-farms; rural-tourism; economic-development; recruitment; california; kings-county,-california

37. **NAL Call No.: 280.29-Am3A**
Dairy farmer's valuation of market security offered by milk marketing cooperatives.
Smith, C. A.; Roach, B. A. *Am-coop.* p.377-384. (1995)
Journal of Cooperatives, v. 10, 1995, p. 64-71.
Descriptors: dairy-farming; farmers'-attitudes; dairy-cooperatives; cooperative-marketing; milk-marketing; valuation; uncertainty; mathematical-models; willingness-to-pay

38. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.A2R47**
Demonstration farms.
Montgomery, H.; Martin, B. *Resour-Dev-Rep-Ala-Coop-Ext-Serv-Auburn-Univ.* v.25(3): p.2-3. (1991)
Descriptors: demonstration-farms; educational-programs; recreation; alabama; demonstration-farm-of-oak-mountain-state-park

39. **NAL Call No.: 81-M58**
Developing a unique "haunted" adventure for your farm marketing operation.
Feltes, B. *Annu-Rep-Mich-State-Hortic-Soc.* (122nd): p.103-105. (1992)
Descriptors: fruit-crops; farms; direct-marketing; marketing-techniques; farm-income

40. **NAL Call No.: HD2346.U5R8**
Developing a useful marketing plan.
Block, D. W. *Rural-Enterp. Menomonee Falls WI: The Journal.* v.6 (3): p.6-8 (1992 Spring)
Reprinted from: Small Farm News, March/April 1992
Descriptors: market-planning; market-research; models; niche-marketing; sosbam-model

41. **NAL Call No.: 10 Ou8**
Direct distribution of organic produce: sustainable food production in industrialized countries.
Powell, J. *Outlook on agriculture.* v.24 (2): p.121-125 (1995)
Includes references
Descriptors: organic-foods; sustainability; environmental-protection; food-packaging; food-marketing

42.
Direct farm marketing and tourism handbook (On line) n/ap. (Arizona Dept. of Agriculture, Phoenix AZ, 1995)
Adobe Acrobat files/Access info: http://ag.arizona.edu/AREC/dmkt/tabcontents.html
Descriptors: direct marketing; internet

43. **NAL Call No.: Videocassette--no.1752**
Direct marketing for small farmers.
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Cooperative Extension Program. (Agricultural Communications, North Carolina A&T State University, Cooperative Extension Program, [Greensboro NC], 1992).
Descriptors: farm-produce-marketing
Abstract: Shows different marketing options for small farmers. These include pick your own, tailgating, roadside markets, and cooperative markets

44. **NAL Call No.: HD9000.A1J68**
Direct marketing in the 1990s: Tennessee's new farmers' markets.
Brooker, J. R.; Eastwood, D. B.; Gray, M. D. *J-Food-Distrib-Res.* v.24(1): p.127-138. (1993 Feb.)
In the series analytic: Managing challenges in food distribution. Proceedings of the 33rd annual meeting, November 4, 1992, Boston, Massachusetts.
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; shopping; consumer-attitudes; comparisons; tennessee; jackson,-tennessee; knoxville,-tennessee

45. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.V8V52**
Direct marketing lambs and wool to the public.
Kazmierczak, T. K.; Bell, J. B. *Publication collection, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.* (448-011): p.58 (1991)
Includes references.
Descriptors: lambs; sheep; lamb-meat; mutton; wool; pelts; direct-marketing; management; commodity-markets; public-relations; advertising; financial-planning

46. **NAL Call No.: S571.D57--1994**
Direct marketing of farm produce and home goods : direct marketing alternatives and strategies for beginning and established producers.
Cottingham, J. 25p. (University of Wisconsin--Extension, Cooperative Extension Service, Madison, WI , [1994])
Cover title.
Descriptors: farm-produce-marketing; roadside-marketing; farmers'-markets; pick-your-own-farms

47. **NAL Call No.: HD9000.1.J6**
Direct marketing of fresh produce and the concept of small farmers.
Singh, S. P.; Hiremath, B. N.; Comer, S. L. *J-Int-Food-Agribus-Mark.* v.2(3/4): p.97-120. (1991)
Includes references.
Descriptors: fruit; vegetables; fresh-products; food-industry; food-marketing; direct-marketing; rural-urban-relations; location-theory; small-farms; usa; tennessee

48. **NAL Call No.: 23-W52J**
Diversification in the woolbelt.
Allen, J. *J-agric. South Perth, W.A. : Dept. of Agriculture.* v.35 (1): p.30-34 (1994)
Descriptors: farm-enterprises; wool-production; diversification; profitability; floriculture; aquaculture; hay; exports; rural-tourism; farm-forestry; horticulture; deer-farming; goats; livestock-farming; game-farming; alpacas; emus; ostriches

49. **NAL Call No.: HF5415.126.B33-1992**
Do-it-yourself direct marketing : secrets for small business.
Bacon, M. S. xiv, 274p. (Wiley, New York , 1992)
Includes bibliographical references [p. 270] and index.
Descriptors: direct-marketing; small-business

50. **NAL Call No.: HD30.335.C76--1994**
Doing business on the Internet : how the electronic highway is transforming American companies.
Cronin, M. J. xi, 308p. (Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York , 1994)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
The world of networked information -- A manager's guide to the Internet -- The desktop as global village -- Reach out and touch--everyone -- Transforming research and development -- Customer connections -- The entrepreneurial edge -- Putting the network to work -- Looking forward.
Descriptors: business-enterprises-united-states-communication-systems; internet-computer-network; information-networks; communication,- international

51. **NAL Call No.: SB379.A9A9**
Dollars in your mailbox.
Gibson, E. *Calif-Grow.* v.15(7): p.28-29. (1991 July)
Descriptors: marketing; direct-marketing; marketing-techniques; mail-order

52. **NAL Call No.: HD9417.M6K73--1995**
Economic impact of directly marketed livestock in Minnesota.
Kreidermacher, H. A.; Hugunin, P.; Minnesota. Dept. of Agriculture. Market Development and Promotion Division. 48p. (Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture, Market Development & Promotion Division, [St. Paul, Minn.] , [1995])
"August 1995."
Descriptors: animal-industry-minnesota; meat-industry-and-trade-minnesota; livestock-minnesota-marketing; direct-marketing-minnesota

53. **NAL Call No.: aSB319.4.F6**
The Empire apple finds a niche market in the United Kingdom.
Davis, L. *Hortic-prod-rev.* FHORT 11-93: p. 25-26. (1993 Nov.)
Descriptors: apples; international-trade; markets; uk; usa

54. **NAL Call No.: HD1775.S8E262-no.92-7**
An empirical analysis of the efficiency of four alternative marketing methods for slaughter cattle.
Feuz, D. M.; Wagner, J. J.; Fausti, S. W.; South Dakota State University. Economics Dept. 23 leaves (Economics Dept., South Dakota State University, Brookings, S.D. [1992])
"September 1992."
Descriptors: cattle-marketing; cattle-economic-aspects

55. **NAL Call No.: 100-C12CAG**
The Estonian Turg and the California Certified Farmers' Market.
Sommer, R.; Raudsepp, M. *Calif-Agric.* v.45(1): p.16-18. ill. (1991 Jan.-1991 Feb.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; collectivization; prices; consumer-preferences; california; estonian-ssr

56. **NAL Call No.: DNAL-FNC TX341.J6**
An evaluation of the Connecticut farmers' market coupon program.
Anliker, J. A.; Winne, M.; Drake, L. T. *J-Nutr-Educ.* v.24(4): p.185-191. (1992 July-1992 Aug.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: coupons; farmers'-markets; purchasing-habits; fresh-products; vegetables; fruit; consumption-patterns; program-evaluation; nutrition- programs; demography; household-surveys; low-income-groups; ethnic-groups; blacks; hispanics; connecticut-frespa; caucasians; wic-program
Abstract: A study was conducted to evaluate the Connecticut Farmers' Market Project. Hypotheses were that the distribution of Farmers' Market coupons would lead to increased use of farmers' markets and increased frequency of consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Four hundred eighty-nine WIC participants were surveyed: 411 from six WIC programs that provided Farmers' Market coupons (treatment group) and 78 from three programs that did not provide the coupons (control group). Data were collected through a pre-assessment interview and follow-up by telephone or mail. One hundred seventy-two treatment and 44 control group subjects completed the follow-up. Participants who received Farmers' Market coupons were significantly more likely to go to farmers' markets, but the use of coupons was not significantly associated with differences in the overall consumption of fresh produce. However, treatment subjects who spent their own money or food stamps in addition to coupons at the farmers' markets and/or went back to the farmers' markets after using their Farmers' Market coupons showed significantly greater increases in the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables than treatment subjects who did not do so.

57. **NAL Call No.: aTX361.W55G3**
Evaluation of the farmers' market coupon demonstration project.
Galfond, G.; Thompson, J.; Wise, K.; Price Waterhouse (Firm). Office of Government Services. ix, 51p. map (U.S. Dept. of Agiculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Alexandria, Va. [1991])
"Revised draft."
Descriptors: women-united-states-nutrition; diet-united-states; food-relief-united-states;

farms,-small-government-policy-united-states; farmers- united-states-economic-conditions

58. **NAL Call No.: 81-M58**
Expanding farm market opportunities.
Erwin, A. L. *Annu-Rep-Mich-State-Hortic-Soc.* (122nd): p.94-97. (1992)
Descriptors: fruit-crops; farms; retail-marketing; direct-marketing; farm-income; michigan

59. **NAL Call No.: 80-AM371**
Expanding your customer base. A small nursery in a rural setting can expand its customer base (and thus its market share) by copying techniques used by mail-order companies.
Mount, M. H. *Am-Nurseryman.* v.174(2): p.87-89. (1991 July)
Descriptors: nurseries; rural-areas; customer-relations; usa

60. **NAL Call No.: 100-F92**
Experiment station tests specialty crops for Connecticut farmers.
Hill, D. E. *Front-Plant-Sci-Conn-Agric-Exp-Stn.* v.44(2): p.3-5. (1992 Spring)
Includes references.
Descriptors: globe-artichokes; brassica-pekinensis; allium-cepa; cultivars; farmers'-markets; connecticut; radicchio

61. **NAL Call No.: SB379.A9A9**
Export and domestic niche markets drive new fruit varieties.
Chase, L. *Calif-grow.* v.18(9): p.29-31. (1994 Sept.)
Descriptors: cherries; apples; cultivars; exports; prices; flavor; domestic-markets; oranges; california; japan

62. **NAL Call No.: SB249.N6**
Extension marketing clubs: Lubbock area cotton farmers.
Smith, J. G. *Proc-Beltwide-Cotton-Prod-Res-Conf. Memphis, Tenn. : National Cotton Council of America.* v.1: p.414-415 (1992)
Includes references.
Descriptors: cotton; farmers; extension; marketing; texas

63. **NAL Call No.: 275.29-Id13Idc**
Farm and ranch recreation.
Rimbey, N. R.; Gardner, R. L.; Makus, L. D. *Curr-inf-ser. [Moscow] : Agricultural Extension Service, Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agriculture, University of Idaho.* #953: p.5 (1992 July)
Descriptors: farm-holidays; recreation; marketing; resources; time-management; insurance; outdoor-recreation; public-domain; idaho

64. **NAL Call No.: 23-W52J**
Farm and station stay--an alternative industry, not a hobby.
Palmer, G. *J-agric. South Perth, W.A. : Dept. of Agriculture.* v.36: p.3-8 (1995)
Descriptors: farms; rural-tourism; profitability; marketing; western-australia

65. **NAL Call No.: aHN90.C6R873**
Farm holidays and ranch vacations.
Donselaar, D. v. *Rural-Inf-Cent-Publ-Ser. Beltsville, Md. : The Center.* #18: 16p. (1992 Mar.)
Bibliography.
Descriptors: farm-holidays; vacations; bibliographies; rural-tourism; usa

66. **NAL Call No.: 275.29-Ar4Mi**
Farm pond management for recreational fishing.
Cline, D. J.; Killian, H. S. *MP. [Little Rock] : Agricultural Extension Service, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture ; [Washington, D.C.] : U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.* #360: 18p. ([1994?])
Descriptors: fish-ponds; farms; angling; design; construction; watersheds; fishes; stocking-density; balances; liming; fertilizers; aquatic-weeds; biological-control; physical-control; chemical-control; water-quality

67. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Farm vacations can mean extra dollars.

Williams, L. *Small farm today.* v.13 (5): p.56 (1996 Oct.-1996 Nov.)
Descriptors: farming; ancillary-enterprises; bed-and-breakfast-accommodation; non-farm-income

68. **NAL Call No.: KF1681.A246**
The farmer's comprehensive liability insurance policy: business pursuits exclusion.
Copeland, J. D. *Prod-bull. Fayetteville, AR : The Center.* (4): p.8 (1991 July)
Part of a series.
Descriptors: farm-management; insurance; legal-liability; ancillary-enterprises; off-farm-employment; usa

69. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Farmer's market bakery.
Hammond, S. *Small-farm-today* v.12(3): p.43. (1995 June)
Descriptors: small-farms; ancillary-enterprises; bakery-products

70. **NAL Call No.: HD9000.A1J68**
Farmer-to-consumer direct marketing: sales and advertising aspects of New Jersey operations.
Nayga, R. M. Jr.; Fabian, M. S.; Thatch, D. W.; Wanzala, M. N. *J-food-distrib-res.* v.26(1): p.38-52. (1995 Feb.)
Paper presented at the thirty-fifth annual meeting, "Strategies for meeting global competition"
Descriptors: direct-marketing; farmers; advertising; sales-promotion; new-jersey

71. **NAL Call No.: HD9003.F37--1994**
Farmers first marketing conference marketing resource directory. Marketing resource directory.
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. 10, 2, 3, 3p. (Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, [S.l.] , [1994?])
Includes bibliographical references.
Descriptors: farm-produce-united-states-marketing-directories; farm-produce-united-states-marketing

72. **NAL Call No.: TX361.A3J63**
The farmers' market coupon program for low-income elders.
Balsam, A.; Webber, D.; Oehlke, B. *J-nutr-elder.* v.13(4): p.35-42. (1994)
Includes references.
Descriptors: elderly-nutrition; low-income-groups; farmers'-markets; nutritional-adequacy; risk; coupons; program-evaluation; elderly; men; women- ; massachusetts
Abstract: The Massachusetts Farmers' Market Coupon Program provides coupons to low-income elders redeemable for fresh produce at farmers' markets. The program was conceived to create new direct marketing opportunities for small farmers, while at the same time introducing people at nutritional risk to farmers' markets. This article reports on the results of an evaluation of the program by participating elders and draws conclusions regarding program successes based on the data.

73. **NAL Call No.: TX341.C6**
Farmers' market nutrition program to gain status.
Nutr-Week. v.22(11): p.6-7. (1992 Mar.)
Descriptors: nutrition-programs; farmers'-markets; low-income-groups; food-aid
Abstract: The farmers' market nutrition demonstration project--an innovative effort to support small farmers and low-income food consumers at the same time--may soon become a federal program. The House committees on Agriculture and on Education and Labor are considering legislation to authorize the small program for four years and sharply increase its potential funding.

74. **NAL Call No.: TX341.C6**
Farmers' market program boosts food stamp use.
Nutr-Week. v.23(12): p.6-7. (1993 Mar.)
Second of a two-part series.
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; food-stamp-program; nutrition-programs; usa; special-supplemental-food-program-for-women,-infants-and-children

75. **NAL Call No.: TX341.C6**
Farmers' market program fulfilling its dual mission, national survey indicates.
Nutr-week. v.25(16): p.1-2. (1995 Apr.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; federal-programs; nutrition-programs; low-income-groups; usa

76. **NAL Call No.: SB379.A9A9**
Farmers market selling can increase returns.
Seelye, H. *Calif-Grow.* v.17(6): p.32-36. (1993 June)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; returns; fruit; vegetables; food-marketing; california

77. **NAL Call No.: HD9005.G532--1996**
Farmers markets '96 : the what's hot/what's not guide for growers & managers. Farmers markets 1996.
Gibson, E. E. L. 11p. (New World Publishing, Placerville CA, 1996)
Descriptors: farm-produce-united-states-marketing

78. **NAL Call No.: HD1773.A4H53--1995**
Farmers' markets and rural economic development : entrepreneurship, business incubation, and job creation in the Northeast.
Hilchey, D.; Lyson, T.; Gillespie, G. W.; Cornell Farming Alternatives Program. 12p. (Farming Alternatives Program, Department of Rural Sociology, Cornell University, [Ithaca, N. Y.] , 1995)
Title from cover.
Descriptors: agriculture-economic-aspects-northeastern-states; farmers'-markets-economic-aspects-northeastern-states; rural-development-economic-aspects-northeastern-states; new-business-enterprises

79. **NAL Call No.: S605.5.A43**
Farmers' markets and the local community: bridging the formal and informal economy.
Lyson, T. A.; Gillespie, G. W. Jr.; Hilchey, D. *Am-J-altern-agric. Greenbelt, MD : Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture.* v.10 (3): p.108-113 (1995 Summer)
Includes references.
Descriptors: community-development; farmers'-markets; informal-sector; agricultural-sector; economic-development; regional-surveys; northeastern- states-of-usa
Abstract: Farmers' markets are important but inadequately studied contributors to local economies. They allow individual entrepreneurs and their families to contribute to the economic life of local communities by providing goods and services that are not readily available through formal, mass markets, and they bring producers and consumers together to solidify bonds of local identity and solidarity. Using data collected from 115 farmers' market vendors in three regions of New York in 1993, examined the characteristics and operations of three categories of vendors: full- time growers, part-time growers, and non-grower artisans and craftspeople. Drawing on theories of mass production and mass markets, we show how farmers' markets represent intermediate social structures that bridge the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

80. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Farmers' markets are growing.
Page, D. *Small-farm-today.* v.12(5): p.50-51. (1995 Oct.)
Descriptors: food-marketing; farmers'-markets; california

81. **NAL Call No.: SB317.5.L65**
Farmers' markets "incubate" rural businesses.
Hilchey, D. *Long-Isl-hortic-news.* p.1-2. (1994 Oct.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; businesses; new-york

82. **NAL Call No.: S1.N32**
Farmers take charge of marketing: new co-ops capture the value of quality.
Bowman, G. *New-farm.* v.15(7): p.12-16. (1993 Nov.-1993 Dec.)
Descriptors: crops; organic-farming; cooperative-marketing

83. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Fee fishing: income opportunities for rural areas.
Kiely, J. *RD.* (751): p.11-14. ([1993?])
In the subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Fish and Wildlife Management: Aquaculture and Fishing.
Descriptors: salmo-trutta; angling; farm-income; fees; recreation; marketing; water-quality; pennsylvania

84. **NAL Call No.: 60.18-J82**
Fee hunting in the Texas Trans Pecos area: a descriptive and economic analysis.
Butler, L. D.; Workman, J. P. *J-Range-Manage.* v.46(1): p.38-42. (1993 Jan.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: hunting; enterprises; game-farming; economic-analysis; ranching; farm-income; returns; multiple-land-use; rangelands; wildlife- management; livestock-farming; texas
Abstract: Previous studies of fee hunting have focused only on fee-hunting ranches with little consideration given to ranches that choose not to operate fee-hunting enterprises. Our study compares fee-hunting with non-fee-hunting ranches. The most important reasons given for engaging in fee hunting were increased income, trespass control, and prevention of nuisance requests for free hunts. The most important reason offered for choosing not to have fee hunting was to keep the ranch available for hunting by family and friends. The potential exists for a large expansion of private land fee hunting by current non-fee-hunting ranches. Ranchers with fee hunting were more likely to manage the grazing resources, wildlife population, and wildlife habitat than non-fee-hunting ranchers. The typical hunting enterprise in the Texas Trans Pecos ares provided a total annual net revenue of about $7,900. Average annual net grazing returns per livestock animal unit were smaller on fee-hunting ranches but fee-hunting revenue offset the difference. The fee-hunting enterprises also reduced risk by providing a second source of cash returns.

85. **NAL Call No.: SB118.48 Y26**
Finding a niche.
Christensen, R. L. *Yankee nursery quarterly.* v.5 (1): p.12-13 (1995 Spring)
Descriptors: nurseries; landscaping; products; services; businesses; market-competition; marketing-techniques; specialization; niche-marketing

86. **NAL Call No.: aHD1401.A7**
Finding a niche may be key to breaking into markets.
Spencer, P. *AgExporter-U-S-Dep-Agric-Foreign-Agric-Serv.* v.4(1): p.19-20. (1992 Jan.)
Descriptors: agricultural-trade; marketing-techniques

87. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Finding the market niche for the small producer.
DeCourley, C. *Small-Farm-Today.* v.9 (6): p.22 (1992 Dec.)
Descriptors: small-farms; farm-enterprises; marketing

88. **NAL Call No.: 389.2538-F82**
Fishin' on the farm.
Morton, A. *Restaur-bus.* v.93(8): p.58, 60, 65, 68. (1994 May)
Descriptors: salmon; fish-farming; seafoods; food-consumption; aquaculture; restaurants; usa

89. **NAL Call No.: SB443.S87-1992**
Flowers for sale: growing and marketing cut flowers: backyard to small acreage.
Sturdivant, L. 197p. (San Juan Naturals, Friday Harbor WA, 1992)
"A Bootstrap Guide"/ Includes bibliographical references (p.189-190) and index
Descriptors: floriculture; flowers-marketing

90. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Fort Lewis Lodge: a place for high quality outdoor recreation.
Cowden, J.; Bromley, P. T. *RD.* (769): p.9-11. ([1993?])
In subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Producers' Experiences: Deer Hunting, Tree Farming, Operating a Hunting Lodge, and Back Road Adventures.

Descriptors: farm-income; hunting; recreation; fees; guest-houses; angling; virginia

91. **NAL Call No.: 1-Ag84Ab-no.640**
From farming to food service: the food and fiber system's links with the U.S. and world economies.
Lipton, K. L.; Manchester, A. C. 1.; United States. Dept. of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. 37p. ill. (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Washington, DC, [1992])
Cover title.
Descriptors: agriculture-economic-aspects-united-states; input-output-analysis; food-industry-and-trade-united-states

92. **NAL Call No.: 166.2-N47**
Furrow to farrow: new hog technology helps local cooperatives add value to corn.
Reilly, J.; Reynolds, B. *Farmer-coop.* v.61(1): p.4-8. (1994 Apr.)
Descriptors: pig-farming; cooperative-farming; maize; value-added; market-prices; usa

93. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
The future of access to private lands.
Jahn, L. R. *RD* (760): p.1-6. ([1993?])
In subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Philosophy and Policy of Recreational Access: Free or Fee.
Descriptors: private-ownership; right-of-access; resource-management; farm-income; recreation; organizations; usa

94. **NAL Call No.: 424.8-AM3**
Get more out of your honey.
Vawdrey, R. *Am-Bee-J.* v.131(7): p.443-444. (1991 July)
Descriptors: honey; beekeeping; commodity-markets; direct-marketing; health-foods; marketing-techniques; market-prices; utah

95. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Growing echinacea for profit.
Polachic, D. *Small-farm-today.* v.13(2): p.53. (1996 Apr.)
Descriptors: echinacea; crop-production; ancillary-enterprises; small-farms; medicinal-plants; saskatchewan; alternative-crops

96. **NAL Call No.: 1.90-C2OU8**
Growing markets for value-added farm products.
Riemenschneider, R.; Trostle, R. G. *Outlook. Washington, D.C. : U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.* p.118-126 (1993 Mar.)
Paper presented at the conference "Agriculture's changing horizon," December 1-3, 1992, Washington, DC.
Descriptors: agricultural-products; value-added; markets; exports; agricultural-trade; usa

97. **NAL Call No.: HD9007.T4H35-1991**
A guide to marketing organic produce.
Hall, C. R.; Johnson, J. L.; Edwards, R. A. 1 v. unpaged (Texas Agricultural Extension Service, College Station TX, [1991?])
Includes bibliographical references.
Descriptors: farm-produce-texas-marketing; organic farming-texas

98. **NAL Call No.: 275.29--D37Co-no.52**
Guide to planning the farm retail market : 1994. Farm retail market.
German, C. L.; University of Delaware. Cooperative Extension. vi, 85p. (University of Delaware, College of Agricultural Sciences, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cooperative Extension, Newark, DE , [1994])
Cover title.
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; retail-trade

99. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.K2K3**
A guide to starting, operating, and selling in farmers markets.
Marr, C.; Gast, K. *MF-Coop-Ext-Serv-Kans-State-Univ-Manhattan. Manhattan, Kan. : The Service.* #1019: p.7 (1991 Dec.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; marketing-techniques; kansas

100. **NAL Call No.: HF5415.126.H35-1992**
A guide to successful direct marketing.

Hall, C. R.; Johnson, J. L. 32p. (Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University System, College Station TX, [1992])
Includes bibliographical references.
Descriptors: direct marketing; farm produce-marketing

101. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Handmade soap at little creek farm.
Berg, P. *Small-farm-today.* v.11(3): p.50-51. (1994 June)
Descriptors: soaps; manufacture; small-farms; ancillary-enterprises

102. **NAL Call No.: S1.N32**
Heavenly hazelnuts: these soil-savers make great windbreaks and pyo plantings.
Cramer, C. *New-farm* v.16(2): p.36-39. (1994 Feb.)
Descriptors: corylus-avellana; hybrid-varieties; cultivation; minnesota

103. **NAL Call No.: SB351.H5S77--1994**
Herbs for sale: growing and marketing herbs, herbal products, and herbal know-how.
Sturdivant, L. vii, 246p. (San Juan Naturals, Friday Harbor WA, 1994)
Includes bibliographical references and index
Descriptors: herbs; herb-gardening; herbs-marketing; herb-industry

104. **NAL Call No.: S522.U5H37**
High hopes orchard.
Merrill, L. S. *Harrowsmith-ctry-life.* v.8(48): p.90-91. (1993 Nov.-1993 Dec.)
Descriptors: ancillary-enterprises; family-farms

105. **NAL Call No.: 81-M58**
High-quality blueberries for U-pick customers.
Hill, D. *Annu-Rep-Mich-State-Hortic-Soc.* (122nd): p.111-113. (1992)
Descriptors: blueberries; farms; direct-marketing; farm-income; crop-quality; michigan; pick-your-own

106. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Home-based business: the calf-hook.
King, T. *Small-farm-today.* v.13(2): p.36-37. (1996 Apr.)
Descriptors: ancillary-enterprises; home-based-businesses; equipment; marketing; calves; ranching

107. **NAL Call No.: HF5466.B678--1993**
Home-based catalog marketing : a success guide for entrepreneurs.
Bond, W. J. xvi, 221p. (McGraw-Hill, New York , 1993)
Includes index.
Descriptors: mail-order-business; home-based-businesses; direct-marketing

108. **NAL Call No.: HD62.38.E95--1994**
The home business bible : everything you need to know to start and run your successful home-based business.
Eyler, D. R. xiii, 298p. ill. (Wiley, New York , 1994)
System requirements for computer disks: IBM-compatible PC; MS-DOS 3.1.
Descriptors: home-based-businesses-management; new-business-enterprises

109. **NAL Call No.: HD62.5.C657--1992**
Home business, big business : how to launch your home business and make it a success.
Cook, M. 1st Collier Books ed. xvi, 270p. (Collier Books; Maxwell Macmillan Canada; Maxwell Macmillan International, New York; Toronto., 1992)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Descriptors: new-business-enterprises-management; home-based-businesses-management

110. **NAL Call No.: HN79.A14R87**
Homegrown effort cultivating path between farm and farmers market.
Moore, G.; Hetland, K. *Rural-Dev-News.* v.17(1): p.11-12, 14. (1993 Feb.)
Descriptors: farmers'-associations; farmers'-markets; publications; missouri

111. **NAL Call No.: SB317.5.H68**
Horticultural crop sales and participation rural farmers' markets.

Lindgren, D. T. *HortTechnology.* v.1(1): p.106-108. (1991 Oct.-1991 Dec.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; feasibility; rural-communities; nebraska

112. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
How small farms can compete with big farms.
Salatin, J. *Small-farm-today.* v.13(1): p.48-49. (1996 Feb.)
Descriptors: small-farms; large-farms; farm-management; market-competition

113. **NAL Call No.: GV198.97.A8T66-1991**
How to establish farm tourism projects. 4th ed.
Tonge, R. 58 leaves : ill. (Gull Publishing, Coolum Beach, Qld.)
Descriptors: farms-australia-recreational-use; tourist-camps,-hostels,-etc-australia; tourist-trade-australia

114. **NAL Call No.: SB126.5.S23--1994**
How to start on a shoestring and make a profit with hydroponics : including set-up, production and maintenance, and marketing.
Saffell, H. L. 3rd ed., completely rev. 136p. ill. (Mayhill Press, Franklin, Tenn., 1994)
Includes bibliographical references (p. 131).
Descriptors: hydroponics; new-business-enterprises; home-based-businesses

115. **NAL Call No.: SD12.O5O34**
Hunting leases offer benefits to landowners, hunters and wildlife.
Masters, R. *Okla-renew-resour.* v.8 (2): p.5. (1993 Spring)
Descriptors: farm-leases; hunting; wildlife-management; farm-income; oklahoma

116. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Hunting preserves for sport or profit.
Kozicky, E. L. *R-D-West-Va-Univ-Ext-Serv. Morgantown, W.Va. : The Service.* v.(753)p.19 ([1993?])
In subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Fish and Wildlife Management: Hunting Preserves.
Descriptors: game-reserves; hunting; private-ownership; cooperatives; game-birds; game-farming; recreation; fees; hunting-dogs; cost-benefit- analysis; usa

117. **NAL Call No.: HD9000.A1J68**
Illinois produce growers study--viability of South Water Market in Chicago as an outlet for marketing produce and analysis of net returns received through alternate marketing channels.
Mandal, S.; Good, D. L. *J-Food-Distrib-Res.* v.24(1): p.139-148. (1993 Feb.)
In the series analytic: Managing challenges in food distribution. Proceedings of the 33rd annual meeting, November 4, 1992, Boston, Massachusetts.
Descriptors: direct-marketing; growers; wholesale-marketing; returns; illinois

118. **NAL Call No.: HD9000.1.J6**
Implications of forecasting farmers' market prices for food marketing in an economy in transition.
Olorunnipa, Z. I.; Florkowski, W. J. *J-Int-Food-Agribus-Mark.* v.5(1): p.9-34. (1993)
Includes references.
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; market-prices; food-marketing; milk-products; potatoes; onions; forecasting; econometric-models; arima; poland

119. **NAL Call No.: TX1.H63**
In-home businesses: profiles of successful and struggling craft producers.
Littrell, M. A.; Stout, J.; Reilly, R. *Home-Econ-Res-J.* v.20(1): p.26-39. (1991 Sept.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: home-based-businesses; crafts; individual-characteristics; management; employment; products; development; consumer-prices; marketing; sales-promotion; product-development

120. **NAL Call No.: S31.T84**
Increasing low-income family participation in the Montgomery State Farmers Market.
Baharanyi, N.; Tackie, N.; Pierce, A.; Woolery, C.; Zabawa, R.; Hopkinson, R. *Tuskegee-Horiz. Tuskegee, Ala. : Sch. of Agric. & Home Econ.,*

Tuskegee Univ., George Wash. Carver Agric. Exp. Stn. v. 3 (1): p.23 (1992 Spring-1992 Summer)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; low-income-groups; transport; consumer-surveys; alabama

121. **NAL Call No.: HD1775.I6I5**
Indiana restaurants as a market for farm-raised fish: results from a 1991 survey.
Riepe, J. R.; Martin, M. A.; Schrader, L. F. *Stn-Bull-Purdue-Univ-Agric-Exp-Stn. West Lafayette, Ind. : The Station.* #665: p.85 (1993 June)
Includes references.
Descriptors: restaurants; marketing-channels; fish; regional-surveys; indiana

122. **NAL Call No.: S441.S855**
Integrated hog farming and market gardening for small farmers in tropical areas of the western region.
Fleming, K. *Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education SARE or Agriculture in Concert with the Environment ACE research projects.* [6] 9p. (1993)
SARE Project Number: LWE 92-2. Reporting period for this report is October 1992 to September 1993.
Descriptors: pig-farming; composting; agricultural-wastes; market-gardens; tree-fruits; sustainability; economic-analysis; small-farms; demonstration- farms; tropics; hawaii

123. **NAL Call No.: HD30.335.A54--1995**
The Internet business companion : growing your business in the electronic age.
Angell, D.; Heslop, B. D. xiii, 242p. (Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., Reading, Mass. 1995)
Includes index. The Internet and virtual commerce -- Developing your Internet business plan -- Getting your business wired to the Internet -- Setting up shop on the Internet -- Using E-Mail for your business communications -- Tapping into network news for research and promotion -- Sharing your business information with FTP -- Establishing your business presence in gopherspace -- Multimedia marketing with the World-Wide Web.
Descriptors: business-enterprises-united-states-computer-networks; internet-computer-network; information-networks; communication,-international

124. **NAL Call No.: SF274.U6U93**
Inventing a new niche product.
UW dairy pipeline. v.7 (1): p.7-8 (1995 Winter)
Descriptors: cheesemaking; product-development; market-research; market planning; market-planning

125. **NAL Call No.: SB435.5.A645**
Is the time right.
Posner, G. *Arbor-age.* v.16(4): p.52-53. (1996 Apr.)
Descriptors: arboriculture; databases; computer-techniques; computer-software; marketing-techniques; internet; world-wide-web

126. **NAL Call No.: Videocassette--no. 1800**
Know your market first.
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Cooperative Extension Program. (Agricultural Communications, North Carolina A&T State University, Cooperative Extension Program, [Greensboro NC], 1992).
Descriptors: farm-produce-marketing
Abstract: Discusses various aspects of marketing farm produce. Topics covered include planning, executing the plan, pricing, promoting, and selling

127. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.O5O5**
Lease hunting opportunities for Oklahoma landowners.
Masters, R.; Anderson, S.; Bidwell, T.; Porter, M. D. *OSU-ext-facts. [Stillwater, Olka. : Cooperative Extension Service, Division of Agriculture, Oklahoma State University.* #5032, rev.: 8p. (1993 May)
Descriptors: landowners; hunting; leases; farm-income; wildlife; oklahoma

128. **NAL Call No.: 275.29-F66C**
Leasing for outdoor recreation in Florida: results of a survey of private landowners and recreationists.

Marion, W. R.; Carlson, P. C.; Klein, M. *Circ-Fla-Coop-Ext-Serv. Gainesville, Fla. : The Service.* #1021: p.8 (1991 Sept.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: farms; recreation; leases; hunting; farm-income; farm-surveys; statistics; angling; off-road-vehicles; boating; florida

129. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.N7A4**
Leisure trends create opportunities for farmers.
Hilchey, D. *Agfocus.* p.10. (1993 Nov.)
Descriptors: leisure-activities; farmers; farm-families; rural-communities; agritourism

130. **NAL Call No.: 280.8-J822**
Limited resource farmers and the marketing system.
Dagher, M. A.; Christy, R. D.; McLean Meyinsse, P. E. *Am-J-Agric-Econ.* v.73(5): p.1485-1495. (1991 Dec.)
Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Agricultural Economics Association, August 4-7, 1991, Manhattan, Kansas.
Discussions by H. Williamson, Jr., p. 1490-1491, T.G. Gebremedhin, p. 1492-1493 and D. Jones, p. 1494-1495.
Descriptors: fruit; vegetables; crop-enterprises; small-farms; marketing-channels; food-marketing; usa

131. **NAL Call No.: 280.29-Am3A**
Live marketing: a cooperative alternative in the livestock industry.
Geary, C. W. *Am-coop.* p.119-122. (1992)
Descriptors: meat-and-livestock-industry; cooperative-marketing; marketing-techniques; auctions; usa

132. **NAL Call No.: SB379.A9A9**
Mail order medflies.
Calif-Grow. v.16(4): p.9. (1992 Apr.)
Special Insert to California Grower - "The Trifly Menace"
Descriptors: citrus-fruits; ceratitis-capitata; detection; direct-marketing; import-controls; california; hawaii

133. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Make that farm pay--now.
Norling, S. J. *Small-farm-today.* v.13(1): p.43-44. (1996 Feb.)
Descriptors: small-farms; ancillary-enterprises; marketing

134. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Making the most of it! Marketing the small farm product.
Klober, K. *Small-Farm-Today.* v.10(2): p.56-57. (1993 Apr.)
Descriptors: livestock-enterprises; small-farms; marketing

135. **NAL Call No.: 100-Or3M-no.877**
Malheur County alternative crops and alternative marketing research. Malheur Experiment Station, Ontario, Oregon.
Oregon State University. Agricultural Experiment Station. 107 p. (Agricultural Experiment Station, Oregon State University, Corvallis , [1991])
At head of title: Malheur Experiment Station, Ontario, Oregon.
Descriptors: agriculture-research-oregon-malheur-county

136. **NAL Call No.: 100-Or3M-no.900**
Malheur County alternative crops and marketing research. 48p. ill. (Agricultural Experiment Station, Oregon State University, [Corvallis, Or.] , [1992])
"June 1992."

137. **NAL Call No.: SH157.85.F52M36--1994**
Management of recreational and farm ponds in Louisiana.
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. 45p. (Louisiana State University, Agricultural Center, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, [Baton Rouge?] , [1994])
Cover title.
Descriptors: farm-ponds-louisiana; fish-ponds-louisiana; fish-culture-louisiana

138. **NAL Call No.: HD2346.U5R8**
Managing a U-pick operation for success.
Klauer, B. *Rural-Enterp.* v.6(4): p.36-39. (1992 Summer)
Descriptors: strawberries; picking; farm-management; marketing; advertising; sales-promotion

139. **NAL Call No.: 81-M58**
Many little things contribute to marketing success.
Tennes, A. *Annu-Rep-Mich-State-Hortic-Soc.* (122nd): p.98-102. (1992)
Descriptors: fruit-crops; farms; retail-marketing; direct-marketing; farm-income; marketing-techniques; michigan

140. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Maple syrup: a good sideline for northern farmers.
Williams, L. G. *Small-farm-today.* v.11(6): p.20-21. (1994 Dec.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: small-farms; ancillary-enterprises; maple-syrup; marketing

141. **NAL Call No.: SD1.O7-no.70**
The market for waterfowl hunting on private agricultural land in western Oregon.
Rasker, R.; Johnson, R. L.; Cleaves, D.; Oregon State University. Extension Service. 14, [1]p. ill., map (Forest Research Lab, College of Forestry, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Or. [1991])
Title from cover.
Descriptors: waterfowl-shooting-oregon; waterfowl-management-oregon; farms-oregon-recreational-use

142. **NAL Call No.: aHD1401.A7**
Market niche opens for U.S. asparagus in Switzerland.
AgExporter. v.6(10): p.15. (1994 Oct.)
Descriptors: asparagus; exports; agricultural-trade; import-controls; usa; switzerland

143. **NAL Call No.: HD9000.1.J6**
Market potential for U.S. small farmers in 2000.
Moak, S. K.; Gyan Baffour, G.; Turner, J. E. *J-int-food-agribus-mark.* v.6(1): p.59-70. (1994)
Includes references.
Descriptors: small-farms; farm-closures; market-competition; family-farms; land-prices; unemployment; exports; time; multivariate-analysis; projections; usa; market-share

144. **NAL Call No.: SB249.N6**
Market potential of organically grown cotton as a niche crop.
Apodaca, J. K. *Proc-Beltwide-Cotton-Prod-Res-Conf. Memphis, Tenn. : National Cotton Council of America.* v.1: p.410-413 (1992)
Includes references.
Descriptors: gossypium; organic-farming; markets; demand

145. **NAL Call No.: HD2346.U5R8**
Marketers learn to survive changes.
Shelly, H. *Rural-Enterp.* v.6(3): p.37-39. (1992 Spring)
Descriptors: direct-marketing; farmers'-markets; conferences

146. **NAL Call No.: S31.T84**
Marketing a market.
Baharanyi, N. *Tuskegee-Horiz. Tuskegee, Ala. : Sch. of Agric. & Home Econ., Tuskegee Univ., George Wash. Carver Agric. Exp. Stn.* v. 2 (2): p.14-15 (1991 Fall)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; consumer-education; food-costs; food-marketing; food-merchandising; alabama

147. **NAL Call No.: HD1775.F6F6**
Marketing alternatives for north Florida Shiitake mushroom producers.
Degner, R. L.; Williams, M. B. *FAMRC-Ind-Rep. Gainesville, Fla. : Fla. Agricultural Market Research Center.* #91-1: 19p. (1991 Nov.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: mushrooms; market-research; retail-marketing; florida

148. **NAL Call No.: SB321.G85**
Marketing alternatives: pick-your-own.
Ashley, R. A. *Grow-Veg-Small-Fruit-Newsl. Storrs, Conn. : Coop. Ext. Serv., USDA, College*

of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Univ. of Conn. v.91 (12): p.4-5 (1991 Dec.)
Descriptors: fruit-crops; vegetables; direct-marketing

149. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Marketing meat comes naturally to these farmers.
Rotts, K. *Small-farm-today.* v.10(4): p.50-51. (1993 Aug.)
Descriptors: low-input-agriculture; alternative-farming; rotational-grazing; beef-production; lamb-production; marketing; beef; lamb-meat

150. **NAL Call No.: HD9000.1.J68**
Marketing of fresh vegetables and fruits by small farmers in Tennessee.
Singh, S. P. *J-food-prod-mark.* v.2(1): p.37-51. (1994)
Includes references.
Descriptors: fruits; vegetables; direct-marketing; small-farms; food-marketing; location-of-production; mathematical-models; tennessee

151. **NAL Call No.: HD1476.U52C27**
Marketing organic produce in Certified Farmers' Markets.
Vaupel, S. *Small-Farm-News. Davis, Calif. : U.C.D. Small Farm Center.* p.8-9 (1991 Mar.-1991 Apr.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; organic-foods; surveys; prices; market-regulations; california; certified-farmers'-markets-cfm

152. **NAL Call No.: HD9436.U62M37-1992**
Marketing out of the mainstream : a producers' guide to direct marketing of lamb and wool.
Sheep Industry Development Program. ii, 57p. (Sheep Industry Development Program, Inc., Englewood, CO , [1992])
Cover title.
Descriptors: lambs-united-states-marketing; wool-united-states-marketing; market-segmentation-united-states

153. **NAL Call No.: HD1476.U52C27**
Marketing to distant places--mail order marketing.
Atkinson, D. *Small-farm-news. Davis, Calif. : U.C.D. Small Farm Center.* p.7, 10, 11. (1994 Mar.-1994 Apr.)
Descriptors: marketing-orders; marketing-techniques; direct-marketing

154. **NAL Call No.: 100-Id14**
Marketing your produce directly to consumers.
Parker Clark, V. J. *Bull-Univ-Ida,-Coll-Agric. Moscow : Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station.* EXT 741: 10p. (1992 Oct.)
Descriptors: direct-marketing; marketing-techniques

155. **NAL Call No.: S1.N32**
Mini-farm, maxi-profits: diverse crops and savvy marketing give these high-value growers the edge.
Sinclair, W.; Peterson, C. *New-farm.* v.16(3): p.28-35, 37, 39. (1994 Mar.-1994 Apr.)
Descriptors: horticultural-crops; organic-farming; small-farms; farm-management; marketing; farmers'-markets

156. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Money making marketing for the small farm and market garden.
Lee, A. *Small-farm-today.* v.12(5): p.52-54. (1995 Oct.)
Descriptors: market-gardens; small-farms; marketing; farmers'-markets

157. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Mushrooms for profit.
Ewton, J. F. *Small-farm-today.* v.11(6): p.25-26. (1994 Dec.)
Descriptors: mushrooms; cultivation; small-farms; ancillary-enterprises

158. **NAL Call No.: HD9436.U62N38-1992**
National Conference on Direct and Niche Marketing of Lamb and Wool : November 6 & 7, 1992, Turf Valley Hotel and Country Club, Ellicott City, Maryland.

National Conference on Direct and Niche Marketing of Lamb and Wool (1992 : Ellicott City, Md. 1 v. (unpaged) : forms, [S.l. : s.n.] , 1992?)
Includes bibliographical references.
Descriptors: lambs-united-states-marketing; wool-united-states-marketing; niche-marketing-united-states

159. **NAL Call No.: 30.98-AG8**
New England farmers and the marketplace, 1780-1865: a case study.
Baker, A. H.; Izard, H. V. *Agric-Hist.* v.65(3): p.29-52. ill., maps. (1991 Summer)
Literature review.
Descriptors: farmers; case-studies; history; markets; marketing; milk-prices; plant-products; animal-products; literature-reviews; massachusetts; new-england

160. **NAL Call No.: HD2346.U5R8**
New Tennessee market opens for business.
Hosey, K. *Rural-Enterp.* v.6(4): p.3-5. (1992 Summer)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; crafts; fresh-products; market-planning; tennessee; knox-county,-tennessee

161. **NAL Call No.: 389.8-F7398**
Niche marketing and product refinements.
Hollingsworth, P. *Food-technol.* v.47(9): p.134, 136. (1993 Sept.)
Descriptors: food-marketing; prepared-foods
Abstract: This article describes some of the new foods that will be available in the stores in the near future.

162. **NAL Call No.: aHD1491.A1U542-no.111**
Niche marketing opportunities through lamb cooperatives.
Kazmierczak, T. K.; Bell, J. B. v, 18p. (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agricultural Cooperative Service, [Washington DC?], [1992])
Includes bibliographic references (p. 18)
Descriptors: lambs-united states.; livestock-united states-cooperative-marketing; market-segmentation-united states

163. **NAL Call No.: HN49.C6N5--1995**
Niche markets and rural development : workshop proceedings and policy recommendations.
Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development. 142p. ill. (OECD; OECD Publications and Information Center, distributor, Paris :[Washington, D.C.], 1995)
Published also in French as: *Creneaux commerciaux et developpement rural: compte rendu d'un atelier et recommandations pour l'action.*
Descriptors: rural-development-projects-congresses; market-segmentation-congresses

164. **NAL Call No.: SB191.W5N672-1994**
Niche markets and value added products.
Sonka, S. T. *Proceedings of the North American Wheat Workers Workshop, March 7-10, 1994, Kansas City, Missouri North American Wheat Workers Workshop.* p.121-127 (1995)
Descriptors: wheat; agribusiness; agroindustrial-sector; market-planning; market-research; paradigm-shifts

165. **NAL Call No.: HD2330.N53--1995**
Niche markets as a rural development strategy.
Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development. 114p. ill., maps (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; OECD Publications and Information Centre [distributor], Paris : Washington, D.C. 1995)
Published in French under the title: *Des creneaux commerciaux pour une strategie de developpement rural.*
Descriptors: rural-industries; rural-development

166. **NAL Call No.: SB249.N6**
Niche markets for cage ginned fiber.
Lalor, W. F.; Wilkes, L. H.; Findley, D. *Proc-Beltwide-Cotton-Prod-Res-Conf. Memphis, Tenn. : National Cotton Council of America.* v.1: p.18-19 (1992)
Descriptors: cotton-ginning; markets

167. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Nontraditional uses of rangelands for income producing activities.

Butler, L. D. *RD* (754): p.9-14. ([1993?])
In subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Alternative Enterprises for Farm and Forest Wildlife and Range Potentials.
Descriptors: rangelands; farm-income; recreation; hunting; leases; fees; wildlife; management; exotics; usa

168. **NAL Call No.: 448.8-C162**
Occurrence of thermotolerant campylobacters in fresh vegetables sold at farmers' outdoor markets and supermarkets.
Park, C. E.; Sanders, G. W. *Can-J-Microbiol.* v.38(4): p.313-316. (1992 Apr.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: spinach; lettuces; radishes; onions; parsley; potatoes; campylobacter-jejuni; decontamination; supermarkets; farmers'-markets; green-onions

169. **NAL Call No.: 60.18-J82**
Optimal vegetation management under multiple-use objectives in the Cross Timbers.
Bernardo, D. J.; Engle, D. M.; Lochmiller, R. L.; McCollum, F. T. *J-Range-Manage.* v.45(5): p.462-469. (1992 Sept.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: grassland-management; pastures; vegetation-management; multiple-land-use; econometric-models; linear-programming; livestock- farming; hunting; wildlife-management; decision-making; brush-control; cost-benefit-analysis; returns; oklahoma
Abstract: The relatively low productivity of the herbaceous stratum of the oak-hickory forests of North America has prompted land managers to evaluate alternative means of increasing large herbivore production. A mathematical programming model was developed to evaluate alternative vegetation management programs for large herbivore production in the Cross Timbers Region of the Ozark Plateaus. The optimization determined the combination of livestock enterprises, lease-hunting enterprises, and vegetation management practices that maximized discounted net returns over a 15-year period. Results indicated that by integrating both herbicides and prescribed fire into vegetation management programs, sufficient herbivory can be sustained to support an economically viable level of livestock production. Vegetation management programs derived under multiple-enterprise objectives differ significantly from those in conjunction with a single enterprise. Economic returns from cattle production are maximized by applying herbicides that induce large increases in grass production, and thus, allow for significant expansion of the cattle enterprise. Under multiple-enterprise objectives, 2 herbicides and prescribed burning may be integrated effectively to sustain sufficient production of grasses, forbs, and browse to support expanded cattle, Angora goat, and white-tailed deer populations. Economic returns from the land resource can be increased approximately 46% as a result of employing multiple-enterprise management objectives.

170. **NAL Call No.: S1.N32**
Organic farmers tap super markets: savy customers and growers flock to 'Fresh Fields".
Cicero, K. *New-farm.* v.15(7): p.44-45. (1993 Nov.-1993 Dec.)
Descriptors: organic-foods; marketing; supermarkets

171. **NAL Call No.: S451.N9E98--no.8**
Outlook and marketing strategies for North Dakota farmers.
Flaskerud, G. K. 1. 19p. map (NDSU Extension Service, Fargo, ND , 1991)
Cover title.
Descriptors: grain-trade-north-dakota; soybean-industry-north-dakota; oil-industries-north-dakota

172. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.F6F55**
Outlook for the Florida State Farmers' Market System.
Degner, R. L.; Moss, S.; Moseley, A.; Mack, S. *Fla-food-resour-econ. Gainesville : Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.* #112: 4p. (1993 May-1993 June)

Descriptors: agricultural-products; farmers'-markets; economic-viability; public-ownership; regional-surveys; trade; environmental-policy; florida

173. **NAL Call No.: SF487.S16--1993**
Pastured poultry profits.
Salatin, J. 1st ed. ill.; viii, 330p. (Polyface, Swoope, Va. 1993)
Includes index.
Descriptors: chickens; chicken-industry; pastures; home-based-businesses; new-business-enterprises

174. **NAL Call No.: aHD1401.J68**
Perspective on farm size and structure provided by value-added measures.
Stanton, B. F.; Jinkins, J. E.; Ahearn, M. C.; Hanson, G. D. *J-Agric-Econ-Res. [Washington, D.C.] : U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.* v.44 (2): p.36-44 (1992 Nov.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: farm-size; value-added; structural-change; agricultural-production; usa
Abstract: Much wider use of net value-added, instead of gross sales, can lend perspective on how farm size and structure are changing in the United States. Net value-added is a more appropriate economic measure to use in comparing farms by size or type on a consistent basis. Net value- added emphasizes the net returns to farm households from the use of their land, labor, capital, and management in agricultural production. Net value-added as a percentage of gross farm income is highest (over 60 percent) on vegetable, greenhouse and nursery, and cash grain farms. It is much lower on livestock farms that buy substantial amounts of their inputs (fed cattle and hogs). Wider use of net value-added directs attention to the economic impact of resources used in agricultural production in the form of returns to those resources.

175. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Piedmont Triad Farmers Market.
Stewart, A. *Small-farm-today.* v.12(5): p.45-47. (1995 Oct.)
Descriptors: food-marketing; farmers'-markets; north-carolina

176. **NAL Call No.: HD9000.A1J68**
Planning for the retail farm market.
German, C. L.; Toensmeyer, U. C.; Cain, J. L.; Rouse, R. J. *J-food-distrib-res.* v.26(1): p.82-88. (1995 Feb.)
Paper presented at the thirty-fifth annual meeting, "Strategies for meeting global competition"
Descriptors: direct-marketing; retail-marketing; market-planning; location-theory

177. **NAL Call No.: 100-C12Cag**
Popularity has spawned diversity--and rules--at certified farmers' markets.
Peck, K.; Voss, R. E.; Grieshop, J. I.; Wright, J.; Stiles, M. *Calif-agric.* v.47(2): p.30-32. (1993 Mar.-1993 Apr.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; growers; market-regulations; participative-management; california

178. **NAL Call No.: S522.U5H37**
The postal orchard.
Fishman, R. *Harrowsmith-Ctry-Life.* v.6(32): p.40-49. (1991 Mar.-1991 Apr.)
Descriptors: horticulture; perennials; trees; fruit-trees; direct-marketing; sources; culinary-herbs; nurseries

179. **NAL Call No.: HD9005.P88--1994**
Proceedings : Putting Small Acreage to Work Seminar : Saturday, December 3, 1994, University of Illinois Building, State Fair Grounds, Springfield, Illinois. Proceedings 1994 Putting Small Acreage to Work.
Putting Small Acreage to Work Seminar (1994 : Springfield, IL i, 68p. [Ill.? : s.n.] , 1994?)
Cover title.
Descriptors: farms,-small-cost-of-operation-congresses; farm-produce-marketing-cost-effectiveness-congresses

180. **NAL Call No.: 275.29-K4152**
The production and marketing of fruits and vegetables in Kentucky.

Coughenour, C. M.; Zilverberg, G.; Hannum, J. B. *RS-Univ-Ky-Agric-Exp-Stn. Lexington, Ky. : The Station.* #77: p.194 (1991)
Includes references.
Descriptors: fruits; vegetables; family-farms; farm-management; marketing; land; irrigation; labor; kentucky

181. **NAL Call No.: 275.29-M58B**
Promoting fee-fishing operations as tourist attractions.
Chopak, C. J. *Ext-Bull-E-Coop-Ext-Serv-Mich-State-Univ. East Lansing, Mich. : The Service.* #2409: 6p. (1992 June)
Includes references.
Descriptors: angling; ancillary-enterprises; fish-ponds; tourist-attractions; farm-holidays; michigan

182. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Promoting llamas.
Williams, L. *Small-farm-today.* v.13(1): p.34-35. (1996 Feb.)
Descriptors: llamas; animal-husbandry; small-farms; ancillary-enterprises; marketing-channels; pennsylvania

183. **NAL Call No.: S544.3.K4K42**
Promotion & advertising for Kentucky's direct markets.
Stegelin, F.; Strang, J.; Weckman, R. *ID-Univ-Ky-Coop-Ext-Serv. Lexington, Ky. : The Service.* #106: p.24 (1991 Aug.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; food-advertising; publicity; fruits; vegetables; kentucky

184. **NAL Call No.: 1-Ag84Mr-no.1154**
Proposed farmers' market for northern Kentucky.
Mongelli, R. C.; United States. Agricultural Marketing Service. 19p. ill., maps (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, [Washington, D.C.?] , [1991])
Caption title.
Descriptors: farmers'-markets-kentucky

185. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Protective legal measures and concerns of private landowners.
Rademacher, J. J. *RD.* (744): p.36-51. ([1993?])
In subseries: Natural resources management and income opportunity series: legal issues.
Descriptors: private-ownership; recreation; legal-liability; state-government; federal-government; farm-workers; usa

186. **NAL Call No.: HN79.W43C67**
Public recreation on private land: research needs and considerations.
Libby, L. W. *R-D-West-Va-Univ-Ext-Serv. Morgantown, W.Va. : The Service.* #747: p.18 ([1993?])
In subseries: Natural Resources Management and Income Opportunity Series: Research Issues: Related to Recreational Access.
Descriptors: farm-income; recreation; decision-making; research; cost-benefit-analysis; regulations; fees; consumer-preferences; usa

187. **NAL Call No.: S1.N32**
Pumpkin power.
Hofstetter, B. *New-farm.* v.16(6): p.43-45, 60. (1994 Sept.-1994 Oct.)
Descriptors: ancillary-enterprises; family-farms; pumpkins

188. **NAL Call No.: SB317.5.H68**
Reactions by consumers in a farmers' market to prices for seedless watermelon ratings of eating quality.
Marr, C. W.; Gast, K. L. B. *HortTechnology.* v.1(1): p.105-106. (1991 Oct.-1991 Dec.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: watermelons; seedlessness; consumer-preferences; food-preferences; consumer-surveys

189. **NAL Call No.: S1.M57**
Red deer marketing.
Kurtz, J. *Small-farm-today.* v.12(4): p.23. (1995 Aug.)
Descriptors: red-deer; livestock-farming; livestock-enterprises; small-farms; markets

190. **NAL Call No.: TX901.C67**
Restaurant marketing on the worldwide web.

Murphy, J.; Forrest, E.; Wotring, C. E. *Cornell-hotel-restaur-adm-q.* v.37(1): p.61-71. (1996 Feb.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: food-service-management; restaurants; computers; marketing; marketing-techniques; customer-relations; internet
Abstract: A large portion of the so-called information superhighway is the internet, which allows people to communicate through computers using electronic mail, bulletin boards, and news groups, among other means. One section of the internet, the worldwide web (WWW), is a network of computers carrying information for public dissemination. Many companies, institutions, and individuals have created WWW "home pages," which are computer files with text, graphics, and links to other, related pages. "Visitors" to web pages are said to be "surfing the net," checking new sites for interesting information or graphics. The WWW now has many commercial sites that seek to get companies' messages to the public in a new and untested medium. While some hospitality companies have WWW sites, most do not, and restaurants are underrepresented. Existing restaurant sites, however, make reasonably sophisticated use of the web's capabilities (e.g., text, graphics, sound, and interactive screens). The technology of the internet may allow marketers to take the ultimate step in mass customization, which is to create a distinct message (and package of product and services) for each customer. It almost certainly will allow personal interaction between restaurateurs and customers.

191. **NAL Call No.: KF27.A3336-1990c**
Review of the use of food stamps in farmers' markets : hearing before the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition of the Committee on Agriculture, House of Representatives, One Hundred First Congress, second session, September 18, 1990.
United States. Congress. House. Committee on Agriculture. Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing. iii, 102p. (G.P.O. : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., Congressional Sales Office, U.S. G.P.O., Washington : U.S. 1991)
Distributed to some depository libraries in microfiche.
Descriptors: food-stamp-program-united-states; farm-produce-united-states-marketing

192. **NAL Call No.: S1.N32**
Room for wildlife.
Cramer, C. *New-farm.* v.15(2): p.24-27. (1993 Feb.)
Descriptors: alternative-farming; wildlife; habitats; hunting

193. **NAL Call No.: A00061**
Rural bounty in Manhattan.
Van Tuyl, L. *Christ-Sci-Monit. Boston, Mass. : Christian Science Pub. Society* p.14 (1991 Sept.)
Descriptors: farmers'-markets; new-york; union-square-greenmarket

194. **NAL Call No.: S131.M64**
Rural development strategies for farm and ranch recreation.
Powell, J.; Rottman, S. J. *MP-Univ-Wyo-Agric-Ext-Serv. Laramie : The Service.* #65: 21p. (1991 Nov.)
Includes references.
Descriptors: farmland; rangelands; recreation-management; ancillary-enterprises; rural-development

195. **NAL Call No.: G155.A1I518--1994**
Rural tourism and sustainable rural development : proceedings of the second international school on rural development, 28 June-9 July 1993, University College Galway, Ireland. Journal of sustainable tourism. Special issue.
Bramwell, B. 1.; Lane, B. 1. 129p. ill., maps (Channel View Publications, Clevedon, Avon, England ; Philadelphia : , . 1994)
"This book is also available as a special issue of the *Journal of sustainable tourism*, vol. 2, nos 1&2, 1994"--T.p. verso.
Descriptors: tourist-trade-congresses; farms-recreational-use-congresses; rural-development-congresses

196. **NAL Call No.: 81-M58**
Seizing the moment.
Patterson, N. *Annu-Rep-Mich-State-Hortic-Soc.* (122nd): p.90-94. (1992)
Descriptors: fruit-growing; farm-management; direct-marketing; farm-income; ohio; pick-your-own

197. **NAL Call No.: HD9005.G53 1994**
Sell what your sow!: the grower's guide to successful produce marketing
Gibson, E. 302p. (New World Pub. Carmichael CA , 1994)
Some chapters available On line/ Access info: http://www.openair.org/cyjour/ sow.html
Descriptors: produce-trade-united-states; handbooks, -manuals, -etc.; farm-management-united- states-handbooks, -manuals, -etc.; gardening-united-states

198. **NAL Call No.: 424.8-AM3**
Selling honey to roadside markets.
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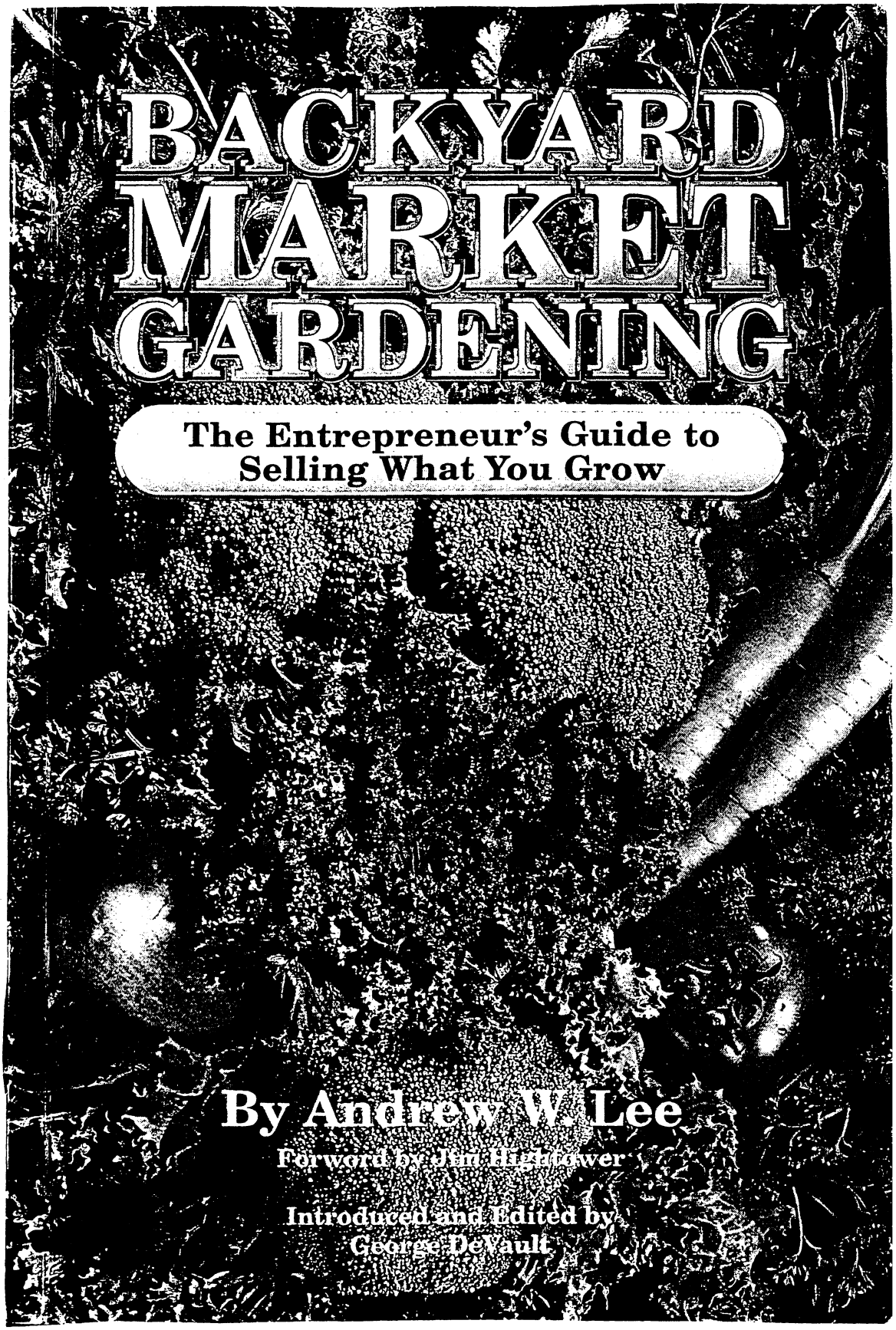
BACKYARD
MARKET
GARDENING
The Entrepreneur's Guide to
Selling What You Grow
By Andrew W. Lee
Forword by Jim Hightower
Introduced and Edited by
George DeVault

BACKYARD MARKET GARDENING

The Entrepreneur's Guide to

Selling What You Grow

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We're Gonna Be Rich!

Growing Specialty Cut Flowers for Market

by Frank and Pamela Arnosky

The cut flower columns in *Growing for Market* from 1995 through 1998

We're Gonna Be Rich!

Growing Specialty Cut Flowers for Market

by Frank and Pamela Arnosky

Cover photo by Robb Kendrick

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"We're Gonna Be Rich" contains articles previously published in ***Growing for Market***, the monthly magazine for direct-market farmers. For information about subscriptions and other books about market farming, call toll-free: 1-800-307-8949.

Introduction

by Lynn Byczynski
editor and publisher, *Growing for Market*

Pamela and Frank Arnosky began writing the flower columns for *Growing for Market* in January 1995 and, so far, they have never missed a month. Here's the story of how they got the job: I met Pamela at an Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers conference in 1994, and soon thereafter began to receive faxed letters from her telling me all about their 30-acre flower farm in the picturesque Hill Country south of Austin, Texas. The letters were packed with practical know-how, but they were also very funny. They had a wonderful conversational tone that made me feel like I had known the Arnoskys, and their flowers, and the great state of Texas, for years. In my mind, I thought of Pam and Frank as the Molly Ivins and Jim Hightower of the flower world. I knew I had spotted a talent, so I called them up and proposed that they write for *Growing for Market*. Pamela told me the letters were intended only as a lure to get me to come down and do a story about them. But they agreed to try their hand at writing regularly, and so they have.

With great enthusiasm and a wry sense of humor, they have regaled *Growing for Market* readers with advice, opinions, and anecdotes about flower farming. The title of this book, "We're Gonna Be Rich," is Frank's favorite refrain whenever success comes their way. Fortunately, Frank and Pam are often successful. They are out there on the cutting edge of the cut flower business. Every year, they search out the unusual - even the unheard of - and conduct their own research to learn all they can about every flower they grow. They are constantly tinkering with their farm, adding new plants, varying schedules, erecting more greenhouses, experimenting with different post-harvest treatments and so on. Every single month they say something *new* about growing cut flowers.

Growing for Market's readers have benefitted enormously from the

Arnoskys' generosity. With no effort to protect their "trade secrets", they have boldly told the flower-growing universe about the varieties they grow, where they get them, how they grow them, and where they sell them. They have undoubtedly given a leg up to some of the other growers selling in their markets, but Pamela and Frank have preferred not to think of other farmers as competition. Instead, they tell what they know, and sincerely encourage others to consider flower growing as a way to make a living on a small farm.

They come to flower growing from strong botany backgrounds, both having attended graduate school in plant-related fields. When they bought their farm in 1990, they started out growing poinsettias and bedding plants in a greenhouse. They differentiated themselves in that market by growing their plants organically. Within a year, they did a small planting of field-grown cut flowers, and were amazed at how well-received their flowers were by florists in Austin. Then came an upscale new supermarket that was looking for bouquets, and the Arnoskys decided to expand to fill the demand. Since then, the bedding plant part of the business has almost disappeared, with just a spring crop of vegetable transplants to help cash flow and only one greenhouse of poinsettias. The cut flowers, though, just keep expanding. As of this writing, they have 10 acres of field production and six greenhouses for winter production.

The columns in this book were written from 1995 to 1998. They are arranged loosely by season, with the January columns from each of the four years followed by all the February columns, then all the March columns and so on. As you read through the columns, you get a good sense of the issues facing the cut flower grower in each season.

The columns are also indexed in the back of the book, so you can look for specific topics as questions arise. Sources mentioned throughout the book are collected alphabetically in Appendix 1.

Whether you sit down and read these columns all at once, or peruse them in small bits and pieces, you're sure to learn a great deal about cut flowers. You'll probably get a few laughs, too, and feel as though you've made some new friends.

Then, we hope you'll join the Arnoskys every month by subscribing to *Growing for Market.* Call us toll-free at 800-307-8949 to order.

- August 1999

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The New Crop Opportunities Center coordinates multi-disciplinary teams of faculty, staff and students to research and set guidelines for producing and marketing selected crops at a profit. The Center is funded by a special grant from the USDA. For more information, contact your county Extension agent, e-mail us at newcrops@uky.edu or write to:

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15 FOOLPROOF IDEAS FOR PROMOTING YOUR COMPANY

Every successful company uses some sort of promotion to influence certain audiences – usually customers or prospects - by informing or persuading them. Reasons for promoting a business include: increasing visibility; adding credibility to you or your company; enhancing or improving your image; and bringing in new business.
The following cost-effective, easy-to-execute ideas have the power to increase sales in a way conventional advertising cannot. The key is to find the methods that are appropriate for your business, marketplace and professional style.

1. CONTESTS. As one example, a cookware store decided to sponsor cooking contests. After sending out a press release announcing a competition
for the best cookie or chocolate cake, a mailingwent out to the store's customers soliciting entries. Food editors, professional chefs and cooking teachers were invited to be judges. Both the winners and the winning recipes were publicized. Essay and design contests are also possibilities, such as a furniture store establishing a prize for student furniture design. Pie eating, pancake flipping, oyster shucking and grape stomping contests make sense for restaurants. Dentists can hold smile contests, while video rental stores can stage movie trivia quizzes.

2. NEWSLETTERS. Another good way to promote, particularly for brokers, banks and business consultants, is through newsletters. They demonstrate how much you know about your field, and do it in a low-key, informative way. They help keep your company high in the consciousness of your prospects.

3. DEMONSTRATIONS. Demonstrations are an option to attract people to your place of business, show them how to best use your product, and establish your credibility. A retail-wholesale fish outlet holds cooking demonstrations twice a week, featuring a different restaurant chef each time and attracting substantial crowds. Recipe cards are even given out. Wallpaper demonstrations, fashion shows, gift wrapping, refinishing and computer demonstrations have all worked well for retailers selling products associated with them.

4. SEMINARS. Often more appropriate for business-to-business marketing, seminars are the commercial side of demonstrations. If you hold a seminar, follow these rules for success:

* Schedule the event at a time convenient to most attendees.
* Be specific in the invitation about when the event begins and ends, who will be there, and what the agenda is.
* Follow up the invitations with personal phone calls.
* Charge for the seminar to give it a higher perceived value.
* Follow up after the event to get people's re actions.

5. PREMIUMS. Also called an advertising specialty, a premium is a gift of some kind that reminds your customer of you and your service. There are thousands from which to

choose: key chains, coffee mugs, refrigerator magnets, baseball caps, paperweights - just about anything that can be engraved, imprinted, silk-screened or embroidered with your company name and phone number.

6. SPEECHES. Depending on your topic and your market, you might want to speak before chambers of commerce, trade associations, parent groups, senior citizens or other local organizations.

7. ARTICLES. Another possibility is to write an article for a trade journal, reprint it, and mail it off to your friends, customers and prospects. This positions you as an expert, and is a particularly good way to promote a consulting business.

8. BONUSES. If you have a restaurant, give away a glass of wine with dinner to introduce a new menu. If you sell to retailers, give them a display fixture with the order of a gross. If you sell office supplies, give away a new pen with a sizeable purchase. If you're in the cosmetics business, offer customers a free sample blusher whenthey buy mascara and lipstick.

9. COUPONS. For best results, the price break should be significant - at least 15 percent. This is one of the least expensive ways to develop new trade, and an excellent tool for evaluating advertising. However, one theory holds that coupons draw people who only buy discount and never become regular customers. So be sure to monitor the results.

10. DONATIONS. Donating your product or service to a charitable cause often results in positive exposure to community leaders, charity board members, PTAs and civic groups. While consumer products are desired most, many organizations also look for donations of professional service time. If you have a restaurant or a large meeting facility, consider hosting an event for a charitable organization. This works best if volunteers for that charity are potential customers.

11. SAMPLES. No matter what you do to promote your business, giving potential customers a sample is an excellent way to attract attention and make a positive impression. In many cases, it makes just as much sense to spend your marketing and advertising dollars on giving out your own products instead of buying advertisements -especially if cash is tight. The key is to give samples to the audience you want to reach, i.e. software packages to computer user groups, or nutritious snacks to health-oriented consumers. In the food arena, where one taste is worth thousand words, firms now exist that test market new products for large and small companies alike through in-store demonstrations. A good demonstration company not only keeps track of how much of your product was given away, but also submits detailed reports on what people said about the product and how much of it was purchased.

12. FREE TRIALS. If your product is too big or expensive to give away outright, why not offer a free trial to qualified customers? Try shipping it out to prospects with no strings attached. Most people will appreciate the opportunity to try the product, and hopefully many will like it enough to buy it.

13. FREE SERVICES. If you can't afford to give away products, offering your services as a way mof generating new business can also pay off. For example, if you own a retail clothing business, send out a flyer offering customers a free fashion consultation to draw them into the store.

14. SPECIAL BENEFITS, RATES OR NOTICES. Smart organizations go out of their way to make customers feel important and appreciated. Frequent flyer clubs are the most pervasive example of loyalty-building benefits for customers only, now adapted by many kinds of businesses. Most software companies sell program updates to customers at discounted prices. And advance notices about sales or other changes or opportunities can help cement customer ties.

15. SAY "THANKS". One of the best ways to let customers know you value their business, and to encourage their continued patronage, is also one of the easiest. It boils down to saying "thank you" - in letters, mailers and surveys. On statement stuffers, receipts and invoices. And in person.

Marketing Ideas

This Is Not Your Father's Farm

By Brian Moyer, PASA Farmer/Member, Berks County

"No, no I'm not in agriculture any more and if you were smart you'd get out too," said this 50-something farmer from the other end of the phone line. I was calling him to see if he wanted sell his fruit at our producer-only market. Instead, I proceeded to listen to him as he told me about his experiences with higher taxes, declining markets and prices, along with higher costs for production and insurance.

I listened to him for about a half hour and, in the end, he didn't see any future in agriculture for him or his children or for that matter, the country.

What could I tell this farmer who had been farming for as long as I've been on this earth? The fact is I can't tell him anything. The funny thing is that, with every problem he mentioned, I thought of a potential solution, but I knew he wouldn't listen. No, I couldn't tell him anything, but maybe I could show him.

We all want to be good farmers and good stewards of the land but part of being sustainable is being profitable. We farmers have to treat the farm like the small business it is. That is, we have to have an entrepreneurial spirit about the products that we raise. Most of us can "think outside the box" and find creative ways to grow things on our farms but a number of us lack marketing skills.

Some examples: this farmer I mentioned told me one problem he faces is that the State closed the road for repairs right where his stand is. My first thought: move the stand. Second, he said he grew the best peaches anywhere but was lucky to break even selling them at the farmers market. My thought: he's selling at the wrong market. He's selling along side resellers who purchase the stuff at auction. Third: the State was going to claim some of his land for a walking trail. He wants to fight it in court. My thought: put in an educational garden and invite people to wander through it along with a market stand. These ideas may or may not work but they are ways to try to make lemonade out of lemons and earn the profit you deserve.

Go to your customers to get your price. "That price might be good for your area but I can't sell for that in mine," is a phrase I've heard often. That's probably true. If you live in a rural area and you're selling chicken for $2.00 a pound and eggs for $2.00 a dozen, not many neighbors are going to buy them. Your neighbors have more access to fresh food than do city or suburban people. You have to find a way to take it to those who don't have it.

Allen Nation, editor of ***The Stockman Grassfarmer***, talks about **taking advantage of your "unfair advantage."** On our farm our "unfair advantage" is that we live in Berks county which is located on the outermost part of southeastern Pennsylvania. The largest concentration of population in the state is in SE Pa. We sell most of our chicken and eggs through two CSAs and a producer-only farmers' market. One CSA is not far from Allentown and the other is in Chester county which has seen a lot of development. The farmers' market is in Montgomery County in a highly developed area. All these locations are 30 miles or more from our farm but well worth the trip. We get the price we need for our products, we are selling to people who cannot get this kind of quality at their stores, and we get to educate these people about where their food comes from and how it was raised. Consequently, word spreads and we do pick up some of our neighbors as customers for on-farm sales.

Use marketing tools that don't cost very much. Take advantage of "free press." Local papers are always looking for interesting stories of people who do something different. When we were putting together our farmers' market this winter, we created a press release to get the word out to the community. I gave the release to the county extension office and they distributed the release to every local and city newspaper. It didn't cost us a cent and the phone started ringing with people who wanted to know more about the market. One local paper had a front page story about the market.

Newsletters are a great tool as well. We send a letter out twice a year to our customers. This past spring, I had a couple of customers call me to say they didn't get our letter yet this year and wanted to know if everything was OK. I was surprised, to say the least.

We treat our newsletter like we are talking to friends and family. We tell them how the winter was, how lambing is going, what projects we're doing, along with projects that worked and didn't work. It's not just about what's for sale. It's trying to make them feel they are a part of the farm. The CSAs that we sell through also use newsletters for their shareholders. They have recipes, interviews with interns, and special activities that are going on at the farm.

Farm tours are a must. I'm not talking about a large organized tour with a big group of people, but if someone has traveled a good distance to my farm, I want their trip to be worthwhile. Nothing fancy, I just take them around and show them what we are doing and why. If they happen to show up at chore time, we get them involved. They help us collect eggs, watch us move chickens, and we've even had some try their hand at milking a goat.

If you attend a farmers' market you need to **market your farm along with your products**. We have photos of our farm and our production methods as well as handouts that tell about our farm, our philosophy and about our farming methods. Even if they don't purchase anything, people should not leave your stand without information about your farm.

Grow what people want. I like raising sheep but lamb can be hard to sell. So, we started out raising chickens for meat and eggs, which most people eat. Three years later, we started offering lamb and now I sell all the lamb I can raise. Bottom line is that you can "piggy back" harder to sell items on items that sell well and your customers trust.

Follow the profits. You need to know your profit margins. How much money are you making after cost? How much do you WANT to make? Not, "how much is this in the store?" Remember, we are not doing the same thing as a store. It's a unique value.

Continued on page 21

Marketing..... *continued from page 20*

If you want to stay profitable, you must be diverse. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Make a little money everywhere on your farm. It will help you in good times and bad. I have a friend who has a great business raising chickens for meat and eggs, but also has grass-fed veal, rabbit meat, a mulch business and puts his tractor to use doing landscape jobs for people. When his layers had a production problem and he wasn't getting many eggs out of 1800 free range layers, it hurt. But not as badly as it would if it had been his only source of income.

Playin' with the big boys. I was at a "Keep Farming Conference" in Montgomery County last winter. The county has lost 50% of its remaining farms in the last ten years. Montgomery County is also home to a large concentration of meat packers. Leidy's, Mopac (now owned by Smithfield), and Hatfield were at this conference. Hatfield and Leidy's both said they would only take white pigs and that they could not do other breeds because their production was not set up for it. Mopac was only going to take Angus beef because of "customer perception" that Angus is better beef than say, Hereford. My thought, "Who cares?"

If we are raising breeds that best suit the conditions on our farms and we develop a customer base for that product, we've found our niche and the "big boys" gave it us. They are set up for mass production, while we are craftsmen that produce a high quality product. **We are not producing the same thing so don't compare your product to theirs. Your price should reflect that difference.**

So no, this is not your father's farm. That is to say, this is not the way our fathers farmed. But it **is** the way our grandfathers farmed. An Amish farmer once told me, "Our grandfathers started the co-ops to market their goods, then when our fathers inherited them the marketing was already in place. Now that we no longer deal with co-ops, we have to learn how to market the goods all over again." I think this is true.

Remember that some of our major roads, such as Route 73 which runs from Berks county all the way to Philadelphia, were built so farmers could get their products to market. My hope is that our little producer-only market is successful so that the farmer that I mentioned in the beginning can look at it and see that there is potential to make a living farming, if not for him, for his children. It just won't be the same way he farmed.

Horticultural Business Management and Marketing Program

SMART MARKETING BULLETINS

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The following bulletins are in PDF format. You will need a PDF file reader to view them. If you do not already have a PDF reader, you can download a free copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Date	Title	Author(s)	File Size
May 2000	Ways to Add Value to Farm Milk	M. Stephenson	32 KB
Mar. 2000	Adapting to Changing Markets with New Products	K. Rowles	29 KB
Feb. 2000	Impact of Generic Milk Advertising on New York State Markets	H. Kaiser	29 KB
Jan. 2000	A Growing Dilemma	K. Park	17 KB
Dec. 1999	Travel the Road to Success with a Marketing Plan	W.L. Uva	37 KB
Nov. 1999	What is Marketing?	M. Brunk	16 KB
Jan. 1994	New Competition in Food Retailing	R. Hawkes	15 KB
Dec. 1993	Your Most Important Asset	D. Perosio	15 KB
Oct. 1993	Know Your Customer's Income	E. Figueroa	12 KB
Aug. 1993	Smart Marketing Can Help the Environment Too	R. Hawkes	28 KB
July 1993	Can Labels Increase Sales of Perishable Products?	E. Figueroa	13 KB
Mar. 1993	Service with a Smile is Good Business	W. Lesser	12 KB
Sept. 1992	Know Your Competitors -- They Know You!	D. Perosio	15 KB
Aug. 1992	Cooperation is Essential to Compete Abroad	E. Figueroa	13 KB
July 1992	Quality is the Key to Success for Food Marketers	R. Hawkes	13 KB
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Oct. 1990	Fresh and Frozen Markets Take More NY Apples	E. Figueroa	13 KB
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Smart Marketing Series

March 2001

SMART PRICING STRATEGIES

Wen-fei L. Uva
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Cornell University

Pricing is an important piece of smart marketing. The price a farmer receives depends largely on the distribution channel used to sell the product. Farmers are usually price-takers at terminal and wholesale markets. One of the major attractions of direct marketing for farmers is the opportunity of gaining control over the prices they can charge. Yet frustration often arises when trying to determine prices, and one of the most difficult problems in direct marketing often centers around the all-too-common practice of price-cutting.

Price provides income, guides the quantity supplied and demanded, serves as a signal to customers, and transfers ownership. Questions one should ask before determining prices including: How much do the competitors charge? How much are customers willing to pay? Does the product have additional value for which the price may be raised? What is the cost to produce the product? And if you slash prices (below competition), how will you maintain profitability?

The most basic element of pricing is to know your costs, including variable costs and fixed costs. Variable costs are cost items directly related to production -- plants, seeds, fertilizer, labor, packaging, etc. Fixed costs are cost items that do not vary with production volume such as rent, taxes, management salaries, and cost of capital. The price of one item should at least cover variable costs in the short run and need to cover both variable and fixed costs in the long run. It is important to establish a gross margin that will cover the total costs of growing and marketing the product and provide a satisfactory profit for the business. Gross margin is the difference between the cost of the product and its selling price.

$$\text{Gross Margin \%} = \frac{\text{Selling Price - Cost}}{\text{Selling Price}} * 100$$

$$\text{Retail Price (\$)} = \frac{\text{Cost of Goods Sold (\$)}}{\text{100(\%) - Desired Gross Margin (\%)}} * 100$$

After the prices are established based on the desired gross margin for each product, it is often necessary for the smart marketer to adjust the prices to match the marketing strategy. One

might want to lower prices of certain items to meet competition, attract customers to the retail outlets (i.e. advertised specials), or sell products that may have been damaged, overstocked or seasonal. Sometimes, one will want to increase prices of certain items to reflect the value of a unique product, a special service, or a prestige image. When considering changing prices, it is important to calculate the impact of such a reduction or increase on the total gross margin of the business. This can be done as illustrated in the following example.

Assume a direct marketer is selling just five major items from a farm stand. The direct marketer has calculated the gross margin for each product sold using the cost of goods (a cost of production or market wholesale price) and has also estimated the approximate sales for each product as a percent of total sales. The percentage of sales and gross margin for each product are shown below.

Contribution to Total Sales and Gross Margin before Price Reduction

Item	A. Percent of Total Sales (Estimated)	B. Percent Contribution to Gross Margin	C. Total Gross Margin (C = A x B)
Apples	35	30	10.5
Mums	10	35	3.5
Pumpkins	15	30	4.5
Sweet Corn	10	20	2.0
All Others	30	20	6.0
Total	**100%**		**26.5%**

In this situation, if the direct marketer decided to lower the price on pumpkins as Halloween promotions to meet a lower price by a competitor or to sell out the seasonal stock. If the price reduction resulted in a gross margin of 10 percent (a drop from 30 percent) and stimulated sales to increase to 20 percent of the total (up from 15 percent). The impact of the price reduction on the total sales and profits of the business could be calculated as following:

Contribution to Total Sales and Gross Margin after Price Reduction

Item	A. Percent of Total Sales (Estimated)	B. Percent Contribution to Gross Margin	C. Total Gross Margin (C = A x B)
Apples	33	30	9.90
Mums	9	35	3.15
Pumpkins	20	10	2.00
Sweet Corn	10	20	2.00
All Others	28	20	5.60
Total	**100%**		**22.65%**

Therefore, the direct marketer could forecast a drop in total gross margin from 26.50% to 22.65%, or a loss of -3.85% in gross margin. Assuming that sales for the business averaged $5,000 per week, this would mean a loss of: $ 5,000 x –3.85% = -$ 192.5.

However, if the lower price on pumpkins attracted more customers or more sales for the business, and resulted in an overall increase in sales of more than $192.50, the result would be an increase in total gross revenue for the direct marketer.

For example:

Gross margin before the price reduction $5,000 x 0.265 = $1,325.00

Gross margin after the price reduction (with a $900 sales increase) $5,900 x 0.2265 = 1,336.35

Now there is a slight gain in total gross margin.

Remember that having the "lowest price in the market" image can't get you higher prices for higher quality products. Having a "value" image is to reach an optimal combination of quality, service, information and price. Price competition in a market situation with multiple similar sellers in one location can cause severe consequences.

The following are some pricing strategies for *Smart Marketers*.

- Price-lining: Price-lining features products at a limited number of prices, reflecting varying product quality or product lines. This strategy can help smart marketers to sell top quality produce at a premium price and an "economy line", e.g. overripe or smaller fruits. Price-lining can also make shopping easier for consumers and sellers because there are fewer prices to consider and handle.
- Single-pricing: The single-price strategy charges customers the same price for all items. Items are packaged in different volumes based on the single price they would be sold for. With such a policy the variety of offerings is often limited. The strength is being able to avoid employee error and facilitate the speed of transactions. Also, customers know what to expect. There are no surprises for customers.
- Loss-leader pricing: A less-than-normal markup or margin on an item is taken to increase customer traffic. The loss-leaders should be well-known, frequently purchased items. The idea is that customers will come to buy the "leaders" and will also purchase regularly priced items. If customers only buy the "loss leaders," the marketer is in trouble.
- Odd-ending pricing: Odd-ending prices are set just below the dollar figures, such as $1.99 a pound instead of $2.00. Some believe that consumers perceive odd-ending prices to be substantially lower than prices with even-ending. However, it might not be suitable in some markets. For example, in a farmers' market situation, products should be priced in round figures to speed up sales and eliminate problem with change.
- Quantity discount pricing: A quantity discount is given to encourage customers to buy in larger amounts, such as $2.00 each and three for $5.00. Gross margins should be computed on the quantity prices.
- Volume pricing: Volume pricing uses the consumers' perception to its advantage, and no real discount is given to customers. Rather than selling a single item for $2.50, two are priced for $4.99 or $5.00.
- Cumulative pricing: Price discount is given base on the total volume purchased over a period of time. The discount usually increases as the quantity purchased increases. The type of pricing has a promotional impact because it rewards a customer for being a loyal buyer.

- Trade discount/Promotional allowances: Price is reduced in exchange for marketing services performed by buyers or to compensate buyers for performing promotional services.
- Cash discount: A discount is given to buyers who pay the bills within a specified period of time to encourage prompt payment.
- Seasonal discount: This type of discount is used to induce buyers to purchase at the end of the season or during off-season.

While the above strategies are widely used and proven effective, smart marketers should not be limited to these strategies. Creative pricing ideas can help you differentiate your products and services. No matter how you price your products, always go back to check it against your bottom-line. Make sure prices for your products reflect your business image and target market and make a profit. Smart pricing can be a good marketing strategy.

"**Smart Marketing**" is a monthly marketing newsletter for extension publication in local newsletters and to place in local media. It reviews the elements critical to successful marketing in the food and agricultural industry. Articles are written by the faculty members in the Department of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University

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Smart Marketing Series

February 2001

Knowing Your Market – The Most Challenging Part of a Business Plan

By Charles Schlough
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"Can you tell me how to find customers for my products and how much I can expect them to buy?", are probably the most troubling business questions that agriculture extension educators hear from small farm operators. Lack of experience and techniques and uncertainty about selecting effective strategies make a mystery of projecting sales revenues. The uncertainties inevitably translate to the level of confidence given to projected bottom line outcomes.

Projecting sales revenue for a new or expanded enterprise can be the most challenging and sometimes speculative part of a business plan. Of all the numbers it contains, "projected sales" is likely to be the least precise number in the absence of historical experience or careful market research and planning. Since the best answer derives as much from art and luck as from science, precision is not possible. Getting as close as reasonable to a consensus level of comfort is about as good as it gets.

The amount of market research needed increases with the complexity of the enterprise and the number of customers needed to reach sales goals. If you're just loading trailers and tankers at the farm gate for shipment to one or a few customers, market research doesn't really matter. But as a farm based business expands or diversifies, the number of customers, the number of products, and the complexity of processing or other added-value activities make market knowledge and business planning essential.

For many small farm businesses, writing a business plan doesn't happen unless a prospective lender requires one. When submitting a business plan for a loan, a prospective lender is not the most important person to be persuaded that confidence is warranted. Remember that the lender is going to rely upon you to repay the loan. So ultimate confidence must rest with you and the homework you do. Get as comfortable as possible with the numbers you reasonably expect (not hope) to achieve. If not, you may be sadly facing far greater discomfort if you cannot repay the loan. Look for weaknesses in your assumptions. Which ones leave you a bit uneasy. Those are the ones that need further attention.

Confidence about revenue projections relies on several underlying decisions and activities. How reliable are your production capacity and plans? Can you grow and process enough product at an acceptable level of quality in a timely manner to generate the revenues you project? Will you have adequate access

and distribution to your projected customers? Whether you are marketing directly or indirectly, without access and delivery channels to your projected buyers, production capacity may be over invested and sales projections too high.

In addition to production, marketing, and distribution, the overall business plan should consider how you manage natural and physical resources that support planned production levels. There will be constraints of terrain, soil, water, nutrients and by-products that will impact labor and equipment requirements, sustainability, environmental, and regulatory concerns.

The level of confidence you create in the projected sales figures should be foremost in your mind and the plan document whether preparing a business plan for yourself, a lender, partner, or investor. Higher levels of confidence will depend upon good market knowledge and planning based on justifiable and convincing assumptions about sales. The best way to do that is to undertake and demonstrate good homework.

Gaining knowledge of the market

An important part of making reliable sales projections is to reasonably estimate the size, location and purchase criteria of the customers you intend to attract. How do you do that?

It all starts with asking questions. Either you do primary research - going directly to the prospective customers, or get secondary research, like census and demographic data. Secondary data are more difficult to gather and analyze without training or paying for expensive professional time. Furthermore, market research data are not available for very small market areas or specialized products or niches. But the larger the geographic reach or volume of business you expect to achieve, the more important and affordable this approach becomes.

For farm-based direct marketing to consumers, the process is much less refined, less difficult, and more interesting. Here are some good sources of information to learn about your prospective market:

- Cooperative Extension educators who specialize in your product area;
- Specialized publications and newsletters;
- The internet holds a vast amount of information
- Libraries – local public libraries and specialized land grant university libraries;
- Associations that specialize in the product area of your interest;
- Ask your prospective customers what they want, what they are not finding among current choices. Learn what would satisfy their needs and wants;
- Talk to buyers, talk to neighbors, and observe operations that are successful;
- Ask your family and employees what they think the strengths and weaknesses are of your present operation and of any possible new ones. Get their input.

If you sell commodities or consumer products that are well established in the marketplace, you should determine what distinguishes your product from that of competitors. Understand your competition. How well are they serving the needs of the market? What are customers saying about them? What can you learn about the market from their example? Are they positioned to capture the same market opportunity as you are? What isn't working for them? Do they demonstrate anything that you haven't considered?

When selling into markets other than direct to consumers, you will rely upon retailers, wholesalers, and brokers. They know their customers, their history, their unfulfilled needs and wants for distinctive attributes and products. Make contact with their customers if possible and learn what they want.

It is very helpful to keep in mind that successful food marketing today must consider four basic characteristics consumers look for: is it healthy, is it safe, is it gratifying, and is it convenient? Apply these as a test to your products, processing, pricing, packaging, and promotion.

To add further confidence to your business plan, consider what unexpected external or market factors can upset your marketing plans and sales projections and consider what responsive measures you might take if necessary. Think about alternative plans and strategies. You should be prepared to demonstrate flexibility, resilience, and resourcefulness in the face of the unexpected, for that is very likely the condition that will unfold.

The bottom line of this message is – your assumptions about market size and market capture make sales projection a vulnerable figure in a business plan. Use the process of business planning as one of discovery, thinking, and frequent re-writing. It's better as a tool for planning success than merely a device to get a loan (and maybe get into trouble if done too casually). A business plan written only to please a lender won't assure you that you can repay the loan, but a business plan prepared as if your livelihood depends on it can bring great rewards.

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Smart Marketing Series

July 2001

Farm to Retail Price Relationships for Fluid Milk

Charles F. Nicholson, Senior Research Associate
Andrew Novakovic, E. V. Baker Professor of Agricultural Economics and Chair
Department of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

The relationship between farm prices and the retail prices of milk and dairy products has received a great deal of attention recently. As farm milk prices fell to low levels last year, farm groups questioned why the price of milk at the supermarket didn't seem to be falling to the same degree. When the issue of the relationship between farm and retail prices arises, it is often focused on fluid milk, because that product undergoes relatively little transformation from the farm to the supermarket. The decline in the proportion of the consumers' dollar received by dairy farmers is often cited as evidence that "something is wrong" with farm to retail price relationships.

How have farm-to-retail price relationships for fluid milk changed over time? To explore this question, it is helpful to adopt a long-term perspective. During the past 30 years, both farm and retail prices have increased for fluid milk (Figure 1). Since 1990, farm milk prices have been highly variable but average prices have not increased. National average prices of fluid milk at the farm and retail level tend to be highly related over this period.

The *gross marketing margin* is defined as the difference between the retail price and the farm equivalent value of the milk used in the product. It includes all costs associated with transforming, transporting, and selling the product at the wholesale and retail level, it is not directly equivalent to profits earned by wholesalers and retailers. For fluid milk, the gross farm-to-retail marketing margin has increased in steps over the last 30 years. What accounts for widening marketing margins? A variety of factors have been advanced as the underlying cause, all of which likely have some merit. At a basic level, however, increases in the marketing margin over time can reflect increases in marketing costs (for processing, transportation, distribution, etc.), increases in the profit margins of processors, wholesalers, or retailers, or a combination of the two.

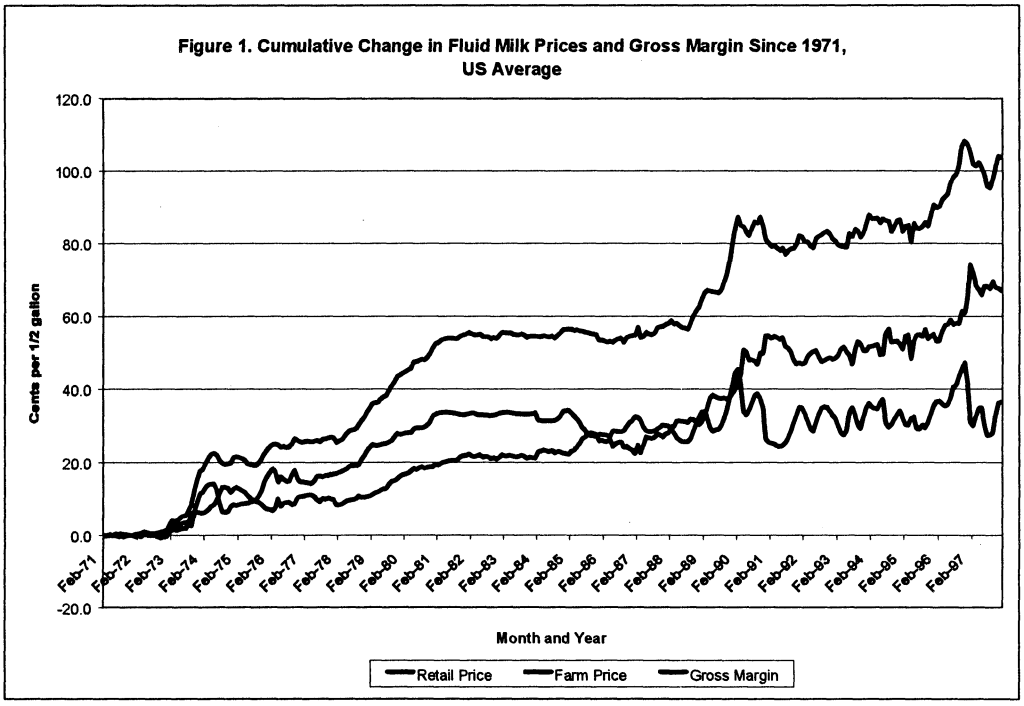
There are four underlying reasons for these increases in the gross marketing margin for fluid milk: increased costs of labor, packaging, and fuel for fluid milk processors and food retailers; costs associated with development of new products and changes in the packaging; changes in retailer perceptions about the role of milk and milk prices in the retail store; and consolidation of firms in milk processing and retailing. Statistical analyses of national-average data indicate that much of the increase in gross marketing margin is associated with increased costs for processors and retailers. That is, increases in margins do not reflect primarily increases in profits by dairy processing companies or retailers at the expense of dairy farmers.

Another main theme in the debate about dairy price relationships concerns whether dairy product prices respond "adequately" to changes in the underlying farm milk price. There is a commonly-held perception that retail prices can and should respond immediately and to both increases and decreases in the farm milk price. It is often stated that retail prices of dairy products respond only to increases in the farm milk price, but not to decreases. This "asymmetric" response to price changes is seen as evidence that wholesalers and retails are taking advantage of farmers and consumers by using variation in farm milk prices to increase profits.

Statistical analysis of what is called "price transmission" from the farm to retail level is used to examine this question. A number of studies have been made since the mid-1980s, and most of them have found evidence that wholesalers and retailers respond more quickly to farm milk price increases than to decreases, at least over the period of a few months. As a result, wholesalers and retailers tend to earn higher net margins for a short time when farm prices drop than if they responded equally to farm price increases and decreases. This "short-run asymmetry" is sometimes cited as evidence of unfair treatment of farmers and consumers. However, it can also be viewed as a retailing strategy that helps maintain price stability for consumers, because retailers tend not to pass on the full amount of a farm-price increase. The evidence about the long-run effects of price changes at the farm level, where an increase in the farm milk price results in a permanent increase in the retail price even if farm prices subsequently decrease, is much less consistent. This "long-run asymmetry" has been found in certain periods in certain regional markets, but does not seem to characterize all fluid milk markets at all times.

It is helpful to consider additional sources of information to evaluate how marketing margins for milk have changed over the last three decades. One is whether increases in retail dairy product prices and margins are in line with increases for food products more generally. A 1999 USDA study reported that retail prices for all food items increased 61% from 1982 to 1997, but retail prices for dairy products increased only 47%. This suggests that retail price and marketing margin increases for dairy products are similar to—but somewhat less than—increases for other food products. A second source of information is the profitability of dairy processors and food retailers over time. Many dairy processors are privately held firms, so information on their profitability over time is largely unavailable. Profitability information reported by Coopers and Lybrand for 12 US dairy processing companies in 1999 indicated that the average return on assets was 3.7%, far less than the 11.9% average for all food industry companies. Publicly-traded food retailers earned about 3% return on assets in 1999. These figures suggest that fluid milk processing and food retailing are low net margin, volume-driven businesses.

In summary, the gross marketing margin for fluid milk has increased over the past 30 years. This is primarily due to increases in costs of processing and retailing. There is a strong relationship between farm and retail prices, although for short periods of time retail prices may increase more rapidly than they decrease in response to changes in the farm milk price.



This article is adapted from "Farm to Retail Price Relationships for Fluid Milk and Dairy Products", a "weblet" available at the Cornell Program on Dairy Markets and Policy website, www.cpdmp.cornell.edu.

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Smart Marketing

April 2001

Understand Your Milk Check First

By Craig Alexander
Extension Associate
Cornell Program on Dairy Markets & Policy
Dept. of Applied Economics and Management
Cornell University

A drop in milk prices, such as we had last year, sometimes leads milk producers to think about the "greener pastures" of changing their milk handler. Comparing prices with neighbors can provide a hot topic at the local coffee shop. In a study of over 200 milk checks from New York producers in August 2000, we found significant variability of pay prices. But producers really need to understand their milk check first, before they can understand and evaluate the alternatives. In some ways, Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) Reform implementation has made this process even more difficult.

The implementation of multiple component pricing (MCP) explains some of the variation. In our milk check study, total component values per cwt. ranged from $10.13 to $12.66 -- although the high was $10.84 for herds under 4% butterfat. We have a simple spreadsheet[1] available that can help producers evaluate alternative component test and production trade-offs on revenue.

However, when comparing prices, components should be taken out of the analysis since component prices are the same for all handlers procuring milk in New York. The only exception is somatic cell adjustment for milk priced under the Mideast order (generally in Chautauqua county). Instead comparison should be made on the net "non-MCP price" including the Producer Price Differential (PPD) plus premiums and minus deductions. Comparison of any of these elements in isolation otherwise can distort comparison.

The PPD is Only Part of the Story

The PPD is basically the weighted average classified value of the milk in the market pool less the average component values paid to producers (with a few other adjustments). The PPD for the Northeast Order is announced at Boston and a producer's PPD is adjusted for the location of the plant of first receipt. The PPD varies from month to month but the location difference between plant zones do not. For example there is a $.75/cwt. lower price for a plant located in Syracuse than one located in Boston. The difference reflects a portion of the hauling costs from a general area of milk supply to a milk deficit metropolitan area.

Some producers in lower priced zones may have the option of shipping to handlers in higher PPD city zone locations but this needs to be evaluated along with the likely increase in hauling costs. Proprietary handlers that move a producer's milk to multiple locations for the month pay a weighted average PPD. Cooperative handlers who move a producer's milk between plants, may or may not pay the exact weighted average PPD but instead may adjust the hauling such that a producer may receive a consistent PPD regardless of where the milk actually goes.

Premiums and Deductions

Premiums generally include any positive adjustment to prices over and above the minimum federal order prices. Quality, volume, and what can generally be called "market" premiums are paid by many handlers. However premium levels and program requirements can vary significantly by handler and region. Some producers also receive a Northeast Interstate Compact payment. This can be included among the premiums and should be factored into weighing the options as we found that other market premiums tend to be lower.

Deductions usually include the hauling cost that is typically based on a per hundredweight rate and often an additional charge per pick-up (or "stop charge"). Other deductions could include coop dues or market order fees paid by independent producers. The promotion fee of $.15 does not vary among handlers.

New York Milk Check Analysis – August 2000 ($/cwt)*

	Average	Range
PPD (plant zone adjusted)	***$2.48***	***$1.92-$3.26***
+ Market	$0.21	$0.00-$1.14
+ Quality	$0.11	$0.00-$0.70
+ Volume	$0.14	$0.00-$0.70
+ Compact	$0.13	$0.00-$0.91
Total Premiums	***$0.58***	***$0.00-$1.65***
- Hauling	$0.55	$0.00-$1.38
- Other deducts	$0.04	$0.00-$0.18
- Promotion	$0.15	$0.15
Total Deducts	***$0.74***	***$0.16-$1.55***
Net Non-MCP Price	**$2.32**	**$1.11-$3.69**

*Preliminary results from 214 milk checks from August 2000 collected from New York State producers. The simple average of farms is reported.

Look Before You Leap

The preliminary results (see table) of our New York milk check study showed wide

variability across of the state of the PPD, premiums and deductions individually and of the net non-MCP price (PPD + premiums – deducts) adjustment. But many additional issues arise when considering market alternatives. The long-term record of financial stability and service of the coop or proprietary handler is important to consider. The distributable profits (and equity) associated with cooperative membership were not included in the study but in some cases are significant. Similarly some proprietary handlers may pay signing bonuses that also were not included in our study. The coop or proprietary handler may provide other valuable services that should not be ignored. Finally keep in mind that premiums can and do change over time. If considering an alternative market, it is important to contact your current handler, as well as any alternative handlers, to understand exactly how your payment might change. Price variation among handlers may offer producers opportunity, but as always "look before you leap."

[1] Can be downloaded: http://www.cpdmp.cornell.edu/CPDMP/Pages/FMMO/MCP.html

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Smart Marketing Series

May 2002

Developing a Dairy Marketing Plan

Mark Stephenson, Ph.D,
Cornell Program on Dairy Markets and Policy
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Cornell University

I teach a dairy marketing course at Cornell University. One topic thread that is woven throughout the semester is that although price risk in dairy markets is real, it can be managed. The only way to ultimately make good decisions about the adequacy of a milk price and the strategy employed to protect it is to remove emotions from the decision-making process. This is best done by the development and implementation of a marketing plan.

Creating a marketing plan does not need to be a difficult process. However, the process should generate a physical document that is your personal road map to price risk management. There is not "one recipe" for such a document, but there are several items that every good marketing plan should address. For instance, how vulnerable is your operation to the big price swings that we have seen in the past decade. A couple of numbers such as a debt-to-asset ratio and a debt coverage ratio will help you understand your vulnerability. Another assessment to be made is your personal tolerance to risk. If your business is quite solvent and you have a high tolerance to risk, a perfectly acceptable decision may be to just take what the cash market gives you. If either your business or your personality can't handle large price swings, then your marketing plan needs to be a bit more ambitious.

A marketing plan must also contain an understanding of your cash costs of production. This is often called your operating costs and it differs from the total costs of production, which further includes values for depreciation, returns to equity in your business and a return to your labor and management. Those costs have to be covered in the long-run, but in the short-run, it may make sense to produce milk at a milk price

that doesn't allow you to replace capital items. However, locking in a milk price that is less than your cash costs of production never makes sense... You should be willing to gamble that the cash market may recover by the time you actually sell your milk rather than to assure yourself a loss on every hundredweight that you produce.

I suggest that you choose three price goals as triggers for action. The lowest price goal is your operating costs of production. Beyond mere business survival, a second reasonable price goal should include an adequate family living withdrawal, money for capital replacement, etc. A final "I want it all" price goal should adequately fund any other reasonable items such as off-farm retirement investments, college funds for your children, etc. With these goals in mind you can begin the next step in the plan.

A futures market or a fixed price forward contract will not directly relate to your price goals. The Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) has futures contracts and options for a class III or class IV milk price but you don't receive a either of those class prices as your milk check. Some forward contracts have been offered as blend price contracts but very few producers sell milk at the standardized component values of a blend price and most receive some level of premiums. You need to understand how your milk price relates to a futures market or fixed price forward contract. That relationship is called a "basis". A simple comparison of your milk checks to the contract benchmark (class or blend prices) for the past couple of years, will provide the mapping of your price goals to a needed contract price.

The final piece of a plan details what you will do when one of the triggers is met. Here it helps if you have some idea of how the market opinion is moving. If the CME class III price for September milk meets your highest price goal but has been moving upward, then you may want to purchase a put option which places a floor under the price but allows for additional upward movement. If the CME price meets your highest price goal but has been falling, you may want to sell a futures contract or consider a fixed price forward contract as a less expensive means of retaining the price goal. There are many different strategies that can be employed under different circumstances.

Finally, you should think about evaluating your marketing plan. After it has been in place for several months, ask yourself if it is performing as you would like it to or whether it needs to be modified. You should also consider how much time to spend on marketing your product. It will be more difficult to reach your price goals if you don't spend a good deal of time focusing on ways to lower or at least maintain your operating costs through good management practices.

Some, or perhaps many, of these marketing concepts may be new to you. As one producer told me, they may be confusing at first but it's not rocket science! Perhaps one of the best ways to tackle something like a marketing plan is to join a marketing club. There are several that are being started in the state and we are helping to support the learning process with materials and guest speakers. Acquiring this type of

knowledge may be best done in a group atmosphere. Ask your local Cooperative Extension office about forming or joining such a group or visit http://hortmgt.aem.cornell.edu/risk/newsletters/marketing_clubs.pdf for additional information about marketing clubs.

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Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture

MARKETING RESOURCE GUIDE

~ PASA ~

Networking to build markets for locally and sustainably produced food

MARKETING RESOURCE GUIDE

This publication is the result of collaboration among volunteers of the PASA Marketing Committee and the following three organizations:

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)

P.O. Box 419
Millheim, PA 16854
(814) 349-9856
fx (814) 349-9840
Quarterly Newsletter
Annual Conference

PASA Marketing Resources:

Adding Value for Sustainability Guidebook.
Kristen Markley (PASA) and Duncan Hilchey (Cornell University), 1998, 85 page guidebook on small-scale food processing. Includes financing, marketing, food safety, and community-support strategies. $8.50 +$3.20 shipping and handling. Make check payable to "PASA," indicate that you are purchasing a guidebook, and mail to address above.

Eat a Real Tomato
Promo cards for producers to use at farmers markets, through CSAs, or other markets to educate consumer on benefits of supporting local and sustainable producers. Packs of 100 cards. 1-5 packs are $5/ pack plus $4 shipping and handling. More than 5 packs are $4/ pack & $5 shipping and handling. Make checks payable to "PASA," indicate how many packs you are purchasing, and mail to address above. Call for shipping and handling for more than 14 packs.

Farm Lane and Farm Stand Signs.
Colorful signs demonstrating that you are both a proud member of PASA and a supporter of sustainable agriculture. Large sign is 18" X 24" and priced at $34.00 + $5.50 shipping and handling. Small sign is 10" X 14" and priced at $22.00 + $3.50 shipping and handling. Make checks payable to "PASA," indicate which sign you want, how many you are interested in, and mail to address above.

Community Supported Agriculture in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) has a list of Pennsylvania CSAs. To be included or for a copy of the list write: PASA - CSA List, P.O. Box 419, Millheim, PA 16854.

Pennsylvania Retail Farm Market Association (PRFMA)

Room 104 4184 Dorney Park Road
Allentown, PA 18104
610-391-9840 sec.
610-876-7116 Pres.
Quarterly Newsletter
Annual 5 State Direct-Marketing Conference

Lehigh County Cooperative Extension

4184 Dorney Park Road
Allentown, PA 18104
610-391-9840

These organizations have compiled this list of resources to aid farmers in their marketing efforts. This is not an exhaustive list of resources nor an endorsement of any of the listed materials or organizations. Changes/additions can be sent to the PASA Marketing Committee, PO Box 419, Millheim, PA 16854.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

The Community Agriculture Project -Wilson College Center for Sustainable Living - A free service working to promote CSAs, expand public awareness and provide free information to growers and consumers on the benefits of CSAs. Contact Steve Moore at (717)-264-4141 xt. 3247, Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave. Chambersburg, PA 17201-1285, wc-csl@mail.cvn.net

Farms of Tomorrow: Community Supported Farms - Farm Supported Communities. Trauger Groh and Steven McFadden, 1990, 169 pp. $10 Includes case studies and discussion of CSA, available through the Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, Inc., P.O. Box 550, Kimberton, PA 19442. (610) 935-7797. Ask for their pamphlet on *Community Related Agriculture,* an excellent introduction to the history and organization of CSA, with answers to the most commonly asked questions. Also a catalog of resources is available.

Community Supported Agriculture on the Urban Fringe: Case Study and Survey. Rochelle Kelvin, 1993. Available winter 1993-1994 through the Rodale Institute, CSA Study, 611 Siegfriedale Road, Kutztown, PA 19530. This publication looks at different aspects of CSA, including organizational models, urban partners in CSA, and economic viability. $4 includes handling and shipping.

The Harvest Times. P.O. Box 27, Mt. Tremper, NY 12547. Quarterly newsletter with current information about CSAs. Subscriptions are $10. They also maintain a directory listing CSAs throughout North America.

A Basic Formula to Create Community Supported Agriculture. Robyn van En. 64 pp. 1988. This handbook is available through Community Supported Agriculture of North America (CSANA), Indian Line Farm, RR 3, Box 85, Great Barrington, MA 01230. Membership in this networking and technical assistance organization is $21, including newsletter subscription. *It's Not Just About Vegetables,* an 18 minute video, is available for $35. Send a SASE to receive a free CSA resource list.

Farmers' Markets

How to Organize and Run a Successful Farmers' Market. Julia Freedgood. 17 pp. 1987. Available free of charge from MA Dept. of Food and Agriculture, 100 Cambridge St, Boston, MA 02202. (617) 727-3018 xt.179.

Establishing and Operating a Farmers' Market. R.P. Jenkins. University of Tennessee, Agricultural Extension Service, No. 847. 1985. Available free of charge from U of TN Extension Mailing Room, PO Box 1071, Knoxville, TN 37901-1071.

Starting and Strengthening Farmers' Markets in Pennsylvania
The Center For Rural Pennsylvania, 212 Locust St., Ste 604, Harrisburg, PA 17101, (717) 787-9555

Farmers' Market Trust
Bob Pierson, 1201 Chestnut St., 4th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 568-0830

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
PA Department of Agriculture
2301 N. Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408
800-468-2433
This program provides vouchers to Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program participants for the purchase of Pennsylvania grown fresh fruits and vegetables from authorized farmers' markets or roadside stands.

USDA Food Stamp Program
(717) 782-2210
Some sales of produce and other items such as eggs are covered under the food stamp program. Vendors interested in taking food stamps should call to talk to your regional representative.

Marketing Guides, Periodicals and Other Resources

Growing For Market. Fairplain Publications, PO Box 365, Auburn, KS 66402. Monthly newsletter for market gardeners. $26/year.

High Value Crop Newsletter. Sweet Enterprises, 7488 Comet View Court, San Diego, CA 92120. Contact Claude Sweet at (619) 286-1534. Subscription includes Excel spreadsheet data files to help growers of fruit and nut trees, flowers and other high value crops analyze potential risk and revenue. $60/year. Sample data file $6; sample newsletter $6.

Small Farm Today: The How-To Magazine of Alternative Crops, Livestock, and Direct Marketing. 3903 W. Ridge Trail Road, Clark, MO 65243. 1-800-633-2535. Bi-monthly subscription $21/year.

PASA Passages
P.O. Box 419
Millheim, PA 16854
(814) 349-9856
quarterly newsletter of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture. Free to members

[illegible]ning Alternatives
[illegible]rming Alternatives Program
Dept. of Rural Sociology
Warren Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
(607) 255-9832

Greenhouse Management & Production
PO Box 1868
Fort Worth, TX 76101

Grower Talks
PO Box 9
335 North River Street
Batavia, IL 60510-0009

American Nurseryman
650 South Clark Street
6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605-1779

Nursery Manager
PO Box 1868
Fort Worth, TX 76101

Society of American Florists
1601 Duke Street
[illegible]xandria, VA 22314-3406

[illegible]eenhouse Grower
37733 Euclid Ave.
Willoughby, OH 44094-5992

Greenhouse Product News
380 East Northwest Hwy
Des Plains, IL 60016-2282

Greenhouse Business
PO Box 698
Pasrk Ridge, IL 60068-0698

Lancaster Farming
PO Box 609
E. Main St.
Ephrata, PA 17522

American Vegetable Grower
and
American Fruit Grower
37733 Euclid Ave.
Willoughby, OH 44094

Pennsylvania Farmer
PO Box 4475
Gettysburg, PA 17325

Backyard Market Gardening: the Entrepreneur's Guide to Selling What You Grow. Andrew Lee, 1992, Good Earth Publications, Vermont. (802) 985-8184. 352 pp.

How to Make $100,000 Farming 25 Acres. Booker T. Whatley and the editors of *The NEW FARM* magazine, 1987. Rodale Institute, Pennsylvania. (610) 967-8946. 180pp.

Sell What You Sow! The Grower's Guide to Successful Produce Marketing. Eric Gibson. World Publishing, 3085 Sheridan St. Placerville, CA 95667 (916) 622-2248. 256 pp. $21.95 + $3 shipping. Resource Catalog available.

High-Value Marketing (Video). Part of the *Farmer-to-Farmer: Strategies for Sustainable Agriculture* video series produced by Rooy Media and Rodale Institute. $29.95, or $149.95 for the set of six, which also include Field Crops, Rotational Grazing, Vegetables, IPM for Apples, and IPM for Vegetables and Small Fruits. Farm Videos, c/o Rooy Media, 7407 Hilltop Drive, Frederick, MD 21702.

The Packer. Vance Publishing Co. PO Box 2939, Shawnee Mission, KS 66201. National weekly business paper of the fruit and vegetable industry. Subscription includes periodical supplements on market trends. "Fresh Trends - A Profile of Fresh Produce Consumers" is their annually produced consumers survey; available for $10. 1-800-255-5113.

Blue Book Credit and Marketing Guide. Semi-annual reference publication serving the wholesale fresh fruit and vegetable industry. Listings and credit ratings of wholesalers, truckers, etc. arranged by town within state. Produce Reporter Company, 845 E. Geneva Rd, Carol Stream, IL. (630) 668-3500.

Pennyslvania Dept. of Agriculture's Statistical Summary & Annual Report. Doc #PASS-119, available from PDA 2301 N Cameron St, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408, 717-787-3904. Get the facts on what is grown in PA.

Small Farm Resource Guide
The Small Farm Program, Education and Extension Service, Plant and Animal Systems, 1400 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-2220, www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm

Marketing For Sucess - Creative Marketing Tools for the Agricultural Industry
Robert Matarazzo, RJM Marketing, 10 Doe Hollow Ln., Belvidere, NJ 07823, (908) 475-4460

Dynamic Farmers' Marketing
Jeff Ishee, Bittersweet Farmstead, PO Box 52, Middlebrook, VA 24459

Growing Your Own Specialty Food Business
NYS SBDC, Ulster Community College, 651 Ulster Ave., Kingston, NY 12401, (914) 339-1323

Growing Produce Family Style
Nolt's Produce Supplies, 152 North Hersey Ave., Leola, PA 17540, (717) 656-9764

The following five publications are available from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Commodity Promotion Division, Bureau of Market Development, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, 2301 North Cameron Street,
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408.

1) *Pennsylvania Produce Project*
Facilitate linking Pennsylvania fruit and vegetable growers with supermarket produce buyers across the state 717-787-4210.

2) *Marketing Planner*
Help farmers who selling directly to consumers to set up a marketing plan on a simple worksheet. An accompanying sheet contains corresponding views and sales practices of Pennsylvania farmers, obtained from the 1997 Pennsylvania Direct Marketing Survey.

3) *Consumers Guide to Pennsylvaniua Farm Markets*

4) *Pennsylvania Produce Buyers Guide*

5) *Officers of Pennsylvania Agricultural Organizations*

The Food Code
National Technical Information Service, US Department of Commerce, Washington DC. 800-553-6847. The publication number is PB97-133656NIW.

Uniform Code Council
8163 Old Yankee St.
Dayton, OH 45458
(937) 435-3870

Cooperatives

Tuscarora Organic Growers
HCR 71, BOX 168-B
Houstontown, PA 17229
814-448-2173
Founded in 1988, TOG serves small scale organic fruit and vegetable growers in south central Pa. Owned and directed by its own farmer-users, TOG COOP handles produce sales marketing, shipping, and production planning for roughly 20 family farms each season.

Pennsylvania Council of Cooperatives
Crystal Smithmyer
662 Kepshire Rd
Patton, PA 16668
(814) 674-2362
Trade association representing Pennsylvania agricultural and rural cooperatives.

Penn. State Cooperative Business, Education and Research Program
206 Armsby Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 863-0644
Provides a broad spectrum of educational and resource programs for cooperatives in Pennsylvania, mostly free of charge. Assists emerging cooperatives establish by-laws and develop organizational capacity. Conducts youth programs in leadership and business skills.

USDA Cooperative Marketing
Rural Business Cooperative Division
Stop 3252
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250-3252
(202) 690-0368
Provides a wide variety of support services to beginning and existing agricultural cooperatives, mostly free of charge. Publishes monthly magazine, *Farmer Cooperatives*, free to qualifying agricultural cooperatives or organizations ($14/year otherwise).

Farmer Cooperative Publications. This 55-page catalogue briefly describes all publications and videos available from USDA. Available free; order No. CIS Report #4 at above address, or (202) 690-0357.

The State of U.S. Organic Producers Marketing Cooperatives in 1991. Alan Borst. USDA Cooperative Marketing Division Staff Paper #-S7. 25 pages. Free. See above address.

Produce Auctions

Leola Produce Auction
Brethren Church Rd. (off Rt. 23), Leola
(717) 656-9592

Buffalo Valley Produce Auction
Violet and Ridge Roads (off Rt. 45), Mifflinburg
(717) 966-1151

Kutztown Produce Auction
Oak Haven Road, Kutztown
(215) 683-7161

Shippensburg Produce Auction
2 miles north of Shippensburg on Rt. 11
(717) 532-5511

Cumberland Valley Produce Auction
101 Springfield Rd.
Shippensburg, PA 17257
(717) 530-5007

Lebanon Produce Auction
1840 Rt. 72N
Lebanon, PA 17046
(717) 274-0762

Snyder County Produce Auction
RR 1
Port Trevorton, PA 17864
(717) 374-0284

Weaverland Auction
1030 Long Lane Rd.
New Holland, PA 17557
(717) 355-0834

Organic Certification, Merchandising and Market Information

Pennsylvania Certified Organic
Leslie Zuck
PO Box 452
Centre Hall, PA 16828
(814) 364-1344
fx (814) 364-2330
paorganic@aol.com

Wanda Boop
OCIA, PA Chapter - Central
RD 2, Box 80
Mifflinburg, PA 17844
(717) 966-1658

Ron Gargasz
OCIA, PA Chapter - West
RD 2, Box 116A
Volant, PA 16156
(412) 530-7220

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey (NOFA-NJ)
33 Titus Mill Road
Pennington, NJ 08534
(609) 737-6848
Publishes *Organic Market Guide — New Jersey Region 1993-1994.* 192. pp. To receive a copy, send a check for $9.95 (plus $2.50 postage) to the above address. NOFA-NJ and six other state NOFA chapters serve the needs of organic growers through certification, education, marketing programs, and legislation. Call for more information.

NOFA-NY
Pat Kane
472 Monkey Run Rd
Port Crane, NY 13833
(607) 648-5557

OEFFA-Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
PO Box 82234
Columbus, OH 43202
614-294-3663

Farm Verified Organic
RR 1, Box 40-A
Medina, ND 58467
701-486-3580

ATTRA publishes a free *Organic Certification Information Package* describing the certification process. Includes a comprehensive list of national and international organic certification agencies. 1-800-346-9140. See full description of ATTRA's services under "Library/ Information Services" below.

Organic Farmers Marketing Association
PO Box 159
La Farge, WI 54639
www.iquest.net/ofma/
The purpose of OFMA is to advance communication and cooperation among organic farmers in product marketing, consumer education, and public advocacy and secure the economic sustainability of an organic food system.

Organic Produce Merchandising Manual. 1990. Available for $5 from Albert's Organics, Inc. PO Box 786, Kennett Square, PA 19348. (215)388-8410. Also has merchandising aids to promote organically grown foods.

Organic Wholesale Market Report. Published biweekly by the Organic Market News and Information Service (OMNIS), P.O. Box 1300, Colfax, CA 95713. Current market prices for organic fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs; reports comparison prices for non-organic produce and indications of over-supply and under-supply. Rates: $12.50 for 3 months.

National Directory of Organic Wholesalers. 1993 10th Anniversary edition. Annual directory of organic farmers, wholesalers, farm suppliers, support businesses, resource groups, certifiers and publications. Community Alliance with Family Farmers (formerly California Action Network), PO Box 464, Davis, CA 95617. 1-800-852-3832. $34.95 + $6 shipping and handling. Call for more information if you would like to be listed in their 1994 edition.

Increasing Organic Agriculture at the Local Level: A Manual for Consumers, Grocers, Farmers & Policy Makers. Maren Hansen and others at the Santa Barbara County Safe Food Project. 1992. Gildea Resource Center, 930 Miramonte Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93109. (805) 963-0583. $16. + $2 shipping and handling.

County Cooperative Extension Offices

The Penn State University Cooperative Extension provides practical information designed to improve the quality of life for local residents. County offices bring the resources of Penn State University to the communities they serve. Extension can help farm marketers in several ways. Agents and state specialists are available on farm product marketing and financial management, as well as food safety, nutrition and processing issues. Start with a call to the county office. When calling your county office, be sure to ask about the following publications:

Farming Alternatives, A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm Based Enterprises. 88 pages. Order NRAES-32. $4.00.

Facilities for Roadside Markets. 30 pages. Order NRAES -52. $5.00.

Post Harvest Handling and Storage of Vegetables and Berries for Fresh Market.
Special Circular # 247. Free.

Produce Handling for Direct Marketing. 26 pages. Order NRAES-51. $4.00.

Enjoy Nature's Fresh... and *Let's Preserve...* These fliers offer information for your customers about the use, storage, and nutrition of popular fruits and vegetables. Free.

Farmers' Guide to Marketing Resources. and *Marketing Resources for Farm-Based Food Processors* Order from Lehigh County Extension Office (610) 391-9840

Agriculture Alternatives - budget series, introductory material for over thirty farm enterprises

Information/Library Services

ATTRA
PO Box 3657
Fayetteville, AR 72702
1-800-346-9140
Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) is a national sustainable agriculture information service designed to be used by commercial farmers. They provide free information packages on numerous topics, in addition to customized research. Ask for their packages on Organic Certification, Community Supported Agriculture, Direct Marketing and Marketing Natural or Organic Meat, Poultry and Eggs.

Campbell Food Marketing Library
St. Joseph's University
5400 City Ave
Philadelphia, PA
Comprehensive library covering all aspects of food and ag marketing.

Sustainable Farming Connection
www.sunsite.unc.edu

Sustainable Agriculture Network - National Agriculture Library
(301) 504-5724
www.ces.ncsu.edu/san

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center - National Agriculture Library
(301) 504-5724
www.nalusda.gov/afsic

Agriculture Network Information Center
www.agnic.org

Promotional Resources

PA Department of Agriculture
Commodity Promotions
2301 N. Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408
(717) 787-2376 - Michael Varner, Chief

Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association
Marketing and Research Program
RD 1 Box 392
Northumberland, PA 17857
(717) 473-8468

Eat a Real Tomato promo cards for producers to use at farmers markets, through CSAs, or other markets to educate consumer on benefits of supporting local and sustainable producers. Packs of 100 cards. 1-5 packs are $5/ pack plus $4 shipping and handling. More than 5 packs are $4/ pack & $5 shipping and handling. Make checks payable to "PASA," indicate how many packs you are purchasing, and mail to address above. Call for shipping and handling for more than 14 packs.

Organizations

Fruits and Vegetables

American Mushroom Institute (AMI)
907 E. Baltimore Pike
Kennett Square, PA 19348
PH: (215) 388-7806
FX: (215) 388-0243

American Pomological Society (APS)
102 Tyson Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802
PH: (814) 863-6163

Cherry Central Cooperative
PO Box 988
Traverse City, MI 49685-0988
PH: (616) 946-1860
FX: (616) 941-4167

Fruit Testing Association Nursery (FTAN)
PO Box 462
Geneva, NY 14456
PH: (315) 787-2205
FX: (315) 787-2216

Home Orchard Society (HOS)
PO Box 776
≠Englewood, CO 80112
PH: (303) 790-1141
FX: (303) 790-1142

National Potato Promotion Board (NPPB)
7555 E. Hampden St., Ste. 412
Denver, CO 80231
PH: (303) 758-7783
FX: (303) 756-9256

National Watermelon Association
PO Box 38
Morven, GA 31638
PH: (912) 775-2130
FX: (912) 775-2344

New Jersey Asparagus Industry Council (NJAIC)
New Jersey Dept. of Agriculture
CN-330
Trenton, NJ 08625
PH: (609) 292-8853

Potato Association of America (PAA)
Rte. 1, Box 115
Hancock, WI 54943
PH: (715) 249-5712

Processed Apples Institute (PAI)
5775 Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd., Ste. 500-G
Atlanta, GA 30342

PH: (404) 252-3663
FX: (404) 252-0774

Rare Fruit Council International (RFCI)
PO Box 561914
Miami, FL 33256-1914
PH: (305) 378-4457

Sweet Potato Council of the United States (SPCUS)
Marsh Hill Rd.
PO Box 14
McHenry, MD 21541
PH: (301) 387-9537

Tomato Genetics Cooperative (TGC)
Cornell University
1017 Bradfield Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
PH: (607) 255-4573

United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association (UFFVA)
727 N. Washington St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
PH: (703) 836-7745
FX: (703) 836-7745

Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA)
PO Box 499
Southwest Harbor, ME 04679
FX: (207) 244-0043

World Pumpkin Confederation (WPC)
14050 Gowanda State Rd.
Collins, NY 14034
PH: (716) 532-5995
FX: (716) 532-5690

Farming

American Crop Protection Association
1156 15th St., NW
Washington, DC 20005
PH: (202) 296-1585

American Family Farm Foundation
100 Maryland Ave. NE, Box 65, Ste 500
Washington, DC 20002
PH: (202) 547-6767
FX: (202) 547-9155

American Farm Bureau Federation
225 Touhy Ave.
Park Ridge, IL 60068
PH: (312) 399-5700
FX: (312) 399-5896

Americans for Safe Food
Center for Science in the Public Interest
1875 Connecticut Ave. NW, Ste. 300
Washington, DC 20009-5728
PH: (202) 332-9110
FX: (202) 265-4954

Aristos Guild
PO Box 7546
Santa Cruz, CA 95061

Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association
PO Box 550
Kimberton, PA 19442
PH: (215) 935-7797
FX: (215) 983-3196

Deep Bed Farming Society
1004 5th St.
Las Animas, CO 81054

Land Institute
2440 E. Water Well Rd.
Salina, KS 67401
PH: (913) 823-5376
FX: (913) 823-8728

National Farm-City Council
225 Touhy Ave.
Park Ridge, IL 60068
PH: (312) 399-5764
FX: (312) 399-5896

National Farmers Organization
2505 Elwood Dr.
Ames, IA 50010-2000
PH: (515) 292-2000
FX: (515) 292-7106

National Farmers Union
10065 E. Harvard Ave.
Denver, CO 80231
PH: (303) 337-5500
TF: (800) 347-1961
FX: (303) 368-1390

National Grange
1616 H St. NW
Washington, DC 2006
PH: (202) 628-3507
FX: (202) 347-1091

National Young Farmer Educational Asso.
PO Box 223
Sheridan, IN 46069
PH: (317) 758-1650
FX: (317) 758-1651

Northeast Organic Farming Associaiton
153 Bowers Hill Rd.
Oxford, CT 06478
PH: (203) 888-9280

Society for Agricultural Training Through Integrated Voluntary Activities
PO Box 116
Bearverville, IL 60912

Commodities

Amcot, Inc
PO Box 76317
Atlanta, GA 30358
Rob Caldwell, Exec. Officer
PH: (404) 451-2678

American Commodity Distribution Assoc.
PO Box 2158
New Smyma Beach, FL 32170-2158
John J. Harter, Exec Sec
PH: (904) 427-2110
FX: (904) 427-2110

American Malting Barley Association
735 N. Water St., Ste. 908
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Michael P. Davis, Pres.
PH: (414) 272-4640

American Oat Association
415 Shelard Pky., Ste. 101
Minneapolis, MN 55426
Pat Henderson, Exec. Director
PH: (612) 542-9817

American Soybean Association
540 Maryville Center Dr.
PO Box 419200
St. Louis, MO 63141
Dennis Sharpe, CEO
PH: (314) 576-1770
FX: (314) 576-2786

CSC Clearing Corporation
4 World Trade Center, Ste. 7300A
New York, NY 10048
Sid Branson, Pres.
PH: (212) 775-0090
FX: (212) 488-9041

Grain Sorghum Producers Association
PO Box 530
Abernathy, TX 79311
Jack Eberspacher, Exec. Dir
PH: (806) 298-2543

Internaitonal Wild Rice Association
7200 Sawtelle Ave.
Yuba City, CA 95993
Carlos Zambello, Pres.
PH: (916) 673-3020
FX: (916) 673-2560

Kamut Association of North America
295 Distribution
San Marcos, CA 92069
Bob Anderson, Exec. VP
PH: (619) 752-5234
FX: (619) 752-1322

National Association of Wheat Growers
415 2nd St. NE, Ste. 300
Washington, DC 20002
Carl T. Schwensen, Exec. VP
PH: (202) 547-7800

National Assoc.of Wheat Growers Foundation
415 2nd St. NE, Ste. 300
Washington, DC 20002

Carl T. Schwensen, Exec. VP
PH: (202) 547-7800
FX: (202) 546-2638

National Corn Growers Association
1000 Executive Pky., Ste. 105
St. Louis, MO 63141-6397
PH: (314) 275-9915
FX: (314) 275-7061

National Sunflower Association
4023 State St.
Bismarck, ND 58501
PH: (701) 221-5100
FX: (701) 221-5101

Soyfoods Association of North America
PO Box 234
Lafayette, CA 94549
PH: (510) 283-2991

U.S. Wheat Associates
1620 Eye St. NW, Ste. 801
Washington, DC 20006
PH: (202) 463-0999
FX: (202) 785-1052

United Weighers Association
543 4th Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11215
PH: (718) 499-3640

Wheat Quality Council
106 W. Capitol, Ste. 2
PO Box 966
Pierre, SD 57501-0966
PH: (605) 224-5187
FX: (605) 224-0517

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
(202) 619-0257
e-mail: hhsmail@os.dhhs.gov
Web: www.hhs.gov

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Immigration and Naturalization Service
425 I Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20536
(800) 375-5283
Web: www.ins.usdoj.gov

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Bureau of International Labor Affairs
200 Constitution Ave, N.W., Room S-5006
Washington, DC 20210
(202) 219-6373

Bureau of Labor Statistics
Postal Square Building
2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Room 4110
Washington, DC 20210
(202) 606-5900

Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room S-5325
Washington, DC 20210
(202) 219-9098
Fax: (202) 219-5071

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room N-3649
Washington, DC 20210
(202) 219-8148

Region III - DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV
Office of Public Affairs
3535 Market Street, Room 14120
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(212) 596-1139

EPA

Main Office
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 260-5922
Fax: (202) 260-6257
Web: www.epa.gov

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20460
(800) 858-7378

Office of Pesticide Programs
401 M Street, S.W., Room 7506-C
Washington, DC 20460
(703) 305-5017
Fax: (703) 305-5558

Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances
401 M Street, S.W., Room 7101
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 260-2902
Fax: (202) 260-1847

Office of Worker Protection Standards
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20460
(703) 305-7666

FDA

Office of the Commissioner
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857
(301) 827-2410
Web: www.fda.gov

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
200 C Street, S.W., Room 6815-B
Washington, DC 20204
(202) 205-4850
Fax: (202) 205-5025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2171
Fax: (202) 225-0917
e-mail: agriculture@mail.house.gov
Web: www.house.gov/agriculture

SENATE

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
328-A Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035
Fax: (202) 224-2682
Web: www.senate.gov

USDA

Main Office
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250
(202) 720-2791
Web: www.usda.gov

Agricultural Marketing Service
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3510-S
Washington, DC 20250
(202) 720-8998
Fax: (202) 720-7135

Agricultural Research Service
6303 Ivy Lane
Greenbelt, MD 20770
(301) 344-2340
Fax: (301) 344-2325
Web: www.ars.usda.gov/is

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 1147-S
Washington, DC 20250-3431
(202) 720-2511
Fax: (202) 720-3982

Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3328-S
Washington, DC 20250
(202) 720-6133
Fax: (202) 690-0289

PENNSYLVANIA CONTACTS

Adams County Fruit Growers Association
P.O. Box 515
Biglerville, PA 17307
(717) 677-7444
Fax: (717) 677-9549

Pennsylvania Horticultural Trade Alliance and Pennsylvania Food Processors Association
208 North 3rd Street, Suite 410
Harrisburg, PA 17101
(717) 238-7364
Fax: (717) 238-7554
e-mail: rpugli1004@aol.com
Web: www.ezonline.com/pugliese

State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania
691 Mountain Road
Orrtanna, PA 17353
(717) 677-4183

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
P.O. Box 419
Millheim, PA 16854
(814) 349-9856
FX (814) 349-9856

Pennsylvania Retail Farm Market Association, Inc.
4184 Dorney Park Rd. (rm 104)
Allentown, PA 18104
(610) 391-9840
jwb15@psu.edu

Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Board
2301 North Cameron St.
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(717) 783-5418

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 N. Cameron St.
Harrisburg, PA 17110

FOOD ANALYSIS

Michelson Laboratory
6280 Chalet Dr.
Commerce, CA 90040
(888) 941-5050

Warren Laborartory
650 "O" St.
PO Box G
Greeley, CO 80632
(800) 945-6669

ABC Research
3437 SW 24th Ave.
Gainsville, FL 32607
(352) 372-0436

Krueger Laboratory
24 Blackstone St.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 876-9118

IDEXX
One Idexx Dr.
Westbrook, ME 04084
(800) 248-2483

Lancaster Laboritory
2425 New Holland Pike
PO Box 12425
Lancaster, PA 17605
(717) 656-2300

farming alternatives

443 Warren Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853 (607) 255-9832

Resource Sheet #6
November 1988

DOING YOUR OWN MARKET RESEARCH

Tips on Evaluating the Market for New Farm-Based Enterprises

by Judy Green

Innovation, experimentation, and change are not new to farmers. Over the years most farms have been through many changes in production, marketing, and management strategy. However, the level of interest in new markets and nontraditional agricultural enterprises has risen dramatically in recent years as farmers look for new ways of generating income from their farm resources. Consider these examples:

The Evans family has been in the dairy business for 48 years. "When my dad started in dairy," says son Paul, "he was milking 40 cows. Now we milk 85, and we do a good job. But with folks moving out here from the city and property taxes going up all the time, we've been thinking about ways to diversify and keep the farm in business. We're thinking about putting in a roadside vegetable stand to take advantage of all that traffic that goes by here nowadays. But we've got a lot of competition already - we don't know whether the area can support one more roadside stand or not."

Bill and Colleen Ryan have been raising free range chickens on a small scale for the past few years. This year they have been selling broilers along with their market vegetables down at the Farmers' Market every Saturday. "It seems we just can't begin to meet the demand for fresh, locally raised chicken," says Colleen. "We're considering building a small scale slaughter facility next year and tripling our production of broilers. We're just not sure if we'll be able to sell that many birds at Farmers' Market alone."

Don Delevan raises beef cattle on his 400 acre ranch, and sells them at the auction house 50 miles away. He's interested in developing his own label and marketing his beef as high quality, lean, and chemical-free to customers who will pay a premium price. "I need to find out where my customers are and how I can get my product to them. I know they're out there somewhere."

EVALUATING NEW IDEAS

You may also be faced with evaluating a new idea - one you think may generate higher profits for your farm business. But before launching any new enterprise, it is essential to look carefully at all the factors involved in starting up and developing the idea. There are five key questions that should be answered before committing dollars and time to a new venture:

1) Is there a market for this new enterprise? Will you be able to sell enough of your new product or service at a price above your cost of production? In each of our examples, there are critical questions about the market that need to be answered before we can judge the feasibility of the idea.

2) Is the new enterprise consistent with your family's goals and your farm business goals? If you don't know what your goals are, or if family members disagree about goals, you'll need to sort this out before going much further with the idea.

3) Do you have the resources needed to be successful in this enterprise? A complete inventory of your resources should include not only land, soils, water, buildings, and equipment but also skills, labor and management time, sources of information, assistance and credit, input suppliers, processors and distributors. Try to take advantage of underutilized resources, and be wary of enterprises whose peak labor requirements coincide with existing labor needs.

4) Will it be profitable? You will need to carefully project income and expenses for an "average future year" to determine whether revenues will be higher than projected costs of production.

5) Can you afford to get into this business? Initial investment and cash flow may be problematic even if the enterprise is a profitable one. A new enterprise may take some time - up to several years - to become profitable.

It is surprising how often people jump into a new venture without taking a good, hard look at feasibility. Unfortunately, many end up wasting precious resources that could have been put to good use with proper planning. Answering each of the questions listed above does require quite a bit of homework. But remember that the time spent in planning is one of the best investments you can make in your farm business.

WHY DO MARKET RESEARCH?

Perhaps the most challenging problem in developing new enterprises is assessing the market. Part of the challenge arises simply from the fact that marketing is new and somewhat intimidating for many farmers who may not have had an active role in marketing their products in the past.

The first step is to understand that there is no magic to market research. It is not a crystal ball that can predict future markets with certainty. However, it can provide information that will make our projections about the future far more accurate, and it can help immeasurably in developing a successful marketing strategy.

It is also important to know that you don't need any esoteric knowledge or advanced technical training to do useful market research. Like any other information gathering process, it is a matter of asking the right questions and looking in the right places for the answers. The goal of market research is twofold:

1) to project the volume of sales and the price you might reasonably expect to achieve with a new enterprise, which is information you will need to analyze profitability and cash flow potential; and

2) to gather information about potential buyers and competitors that will help in developing a marketing strategy.

Some important questions that can be answered through market research include:

What is the Total Market Size presently for this product (or service) within a given area?

How many Competitors are there for this market? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What type of buyer are they targeting?

What Prices can you expect to receive for a given level of quality?

What Trends do you see in consumption, competition, and pricing?

What are the Characteristics of Buyers of this product or service? Age? Income level? Lifestyle? What are they looking for? Where are they looking for it? And how can you do a better job than your competitors in meeting their needs?

What proportion or Share of the total market might you expect to capture?

MARKET RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

There are two general types of market research: primary and secondary. Primary research is anything that involves going out into the real world and gathering information for yourself - by observing people, by counting cars or pedestrians, by surveys, interviews or other direct means. Secondary research involves studying data that has already been collected and published by somebody else. Chances are you will need to use both primary and secondary research to understand the market for your particular enterprise.

Secondary Research: Using Existing Data

Despite the name "secondary", this type of research is described first because it is often the easiest and cheapest way to obtain market information. There are several important types of information you can obtain through secondary research:

1) Population and demographic data provides information about the number of people within a given geographic area and their characteristics, such as income level, age distribution, level of education, household size, etc. This is important in estimating the total size of the market, and in knowing how many of what type of customers you have access to. Demographic trends within your area can also be analyzed.

2) Information about your local and regional economy is usually available, which can tell you the numbers of various types of business establishments, availability of support services, credit sources, zoning and other regulations which may affect your marketing strategy.

3) Production data can sometimes be found which will show the existing level of production of the product or service you are considering, as well as production trends. However, if your idea is new or simply not a major commodity for your region, there may be little information available.

4) Consumption data shows the per capita level of purchases by consumers for a given product or service. Again, this information may not be available for your particular enterprise.

There are numerous sources of secondary data - public libraries, Census Bureau, Chambers of Commerce, universities, local transportation departments, planning boards, economic development agencies, state departments of agriculture, and so on. Extremely useful information can often be found in the most unlikely places. In fact, the most difficult aspect of secondary research is figuring out where to find the information you need.

Primary Research: Do It Yourself

Because you are unlikely to find all the answers to your marketing questions using secondary data, plan on rolling up your sleeves for some real do-it-yourself, primary market research. Primary research is especially important when you are considering an innovative enterprise, a new market, or a very local market for which there isn't much published data.

Good primary research can be extremely elaborate, sophisticated, and expensive but it can also be very simple and inexpensive. Having a small budget is no excuse for not doing your marketing homework. It just means you will need to be creative in developing the most cost-effective method for collecting the information you need. Some common methods for conducting primary research include the following:

1) OBSERVATION - Observation involves counting the number of things or events that may be relevant to your marketing situation. For example, the Evans family in our examples might want to collect the following information by observation and counting: the number of roadside stands within a 30 mile radius of their farm; their specific locations; product lines; number of customers per hour; rate of traffic flow past the stands; the rate of traffic flow past their own farm at various times of the week, etc.

2) WRITTEN SURVEYS - Surveys can be used to solicit information from potential buyers about individual buying patterns, preferences, unfulfilled needs and wants, and other questions that may have an impact on your marketing success. For example, Bill and Colleen Ryan would do well to survey their present Farmers' Market customers to find out how often and in what quantity they would like to purchase fresh broilers next year. They might also use the survey to find ways to improve their service to customers.

   A survey must be very carefully designed to yield useful information and distribution of the survey must be well planned to avoid biasing your results. Some tips for good survey design are:

   a) Keep it short. A single sheet of paper printed on two sides is usually plenty.

   b) Phrase your questions so that you receive clear-cut and meaningful answers. For example, instead of asking "Would you buy more broilers from us next year if they were available?" the Ryans might ask "How many three pound broilers would you expect to purchase from us each month between June and October?"

   c) Use multiple choice questions rather than open-ended questions wherever possible. This makes it easier both to fill out the survey and to analyze the results.

d) Don't be afraid to request personal demographic information. For example, information about your respondents' ages, income levels, and areas of residence can be very valuable. You may even want to ask for an address for your mailing list. However, most people are sensitive to the way in which this information is solicited. Be sure to ask for, not demand the information, and explain how it will be used (e.g. "to serve you better"). Provide multiple-choice categories of ages and income rather than asking people to reveal their exact age and salary.

e) The procedure used to distribute the survey is critical in determining how to interpret the results. For example, if Don Delevan wants to find out about consumer interest in purchasing lean, chemical-free beef, he is likely to get very different responses depending on whether he surveys shoppers at the local health food store or at the supermarket. Either approach would be valid -- Don simply needs to be careful about interpreting his results and making projections based on his particular sample.

f) Test your survey on a small number of "guinea pigs" first. You will be surprised at how often your questions are misunderstood. A simple test usually results in great improvements in the survey's usefulness.

3) TELEPHONE SURVEYS are increasing in popularity. A good phone survey can yield much information quickly and can be relatively inexpensive. Don Delevan might use a telephone survey, for example, to reach 50 supermarket meat buyers within a 200 mile radius and inquire about their interest in lean, chemical-free beef, their delivery schedules, packaging requirements, and so on.

In designing a telephone survey, follow the same principles described for written surveys, but include only the most critical questions and keep them short. Work from a written script so that you are sure to ask questions consistently. Before calling, prepare a form for recording responses efficiently and, as always, test your survey and make adjustments if needed.

4) PERSONAL INTERVIEWS can be extremely informative and are the method of choice when dealing with a limited number of potential buyers. A market research interview will often be your first step in establishing working relationships with wholesale buyers. An interview will not only provide you with detailed information on the buyer's policies and preferences, but will provide the buyer with that all-important first impression of your professionalism and commitment. Be prepared with a list of specific questions and with solid information about the product or service you are proposing to provide. Be sure to leave a calling card. But, above all, don't make any commitments you can't live up to! There is nothing that will ruin a good marketing relationship faster than a broken promise.

Personal interviews can also be used to sample potential consumers in a variety of situations. For example, the Ryans could conduct personal interviews with their Farmers' Market customers rather than having them fill out a written survey. Again, the method of selecting people to interview will affect the results.

5) TEST MARKETING involves offering your product or service on a limited basis in order to evaluate potential sales. Test marketing is especially important when your product is new and unfamiliar to most of your customers. Don Delevan might conduct a market test as simple as offering tastes of his lean beef to customers at the fair, or as elaborate as a three month sales campaign in cooperation with a regional supermarket chain.

Test marketing will obviously be impossible until you are producing a product or service in some quantity. The best use of test marketing is as a follow-up to some of the previously discussed market research techniques, to fine tune your marketing strategy or to provide better information on costs and returns. It is also a useful strategy when evaluating minor changes in your enterprise, or when attempting to tap into a new market with a product or service you are already providing.

EVALUATING THE COMPETITION

A necessary component of any market research is a thorough assessment of the competition. Studying your competition will help to determine the volume of similar products and services already in the marketplace, the strengths and weaknesses of your competitors, and the various "segments" of the market -- that is, the specific types of buyers -- that are being served by each competitor. This information may help you identify a "niche" in the marketplace where you can gain a foothold by outdoing your competition in serving a particular market demand.

There are a number of ways you can learn about your competition. Visit your competitors' businesses, use their products or services, survey their customers, or interview them directly if possible. Some competitors may refuse to share any information with you, but you may be surprised to find some that are quite helpful. They may have suggestions that can decrease direct competition, or that can even be of mutual benefit.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN -- PLAN YOUR MARKET RESEARCH STRATEGY

Market research can be simple or complex, cheap or fantastically expensive, depending on your needs and your budget. Make sure your research is targeted and cost-effective by following these guidelines:

First, allocate a reasonable amount of your time and money to this effort, and plan to work within that allocation. What is "reasonable" depends of course on your judgment of the risks and rewards involved. Second, develop a list of specific questions about your market which you feel you must answer before proceeding to develop the new enterprise. Third, define the specific type of data that you need to collect in order to answer those questions. Fourth, determine which of that data is already available from secondary sources. Fifth, determine what primary research technique(s) you will use to collect the data which isn't already available.

If your plan appears to fit within your research budget, you are ready to implement it except for one important step: SEEK ASSISTANCE! You can save a tremendous amount of time and energy by enlisting the aid of competent professionals, and you need not spend a dime to do so. You should be able to find a small business development program in your area whose staff can review your market research plans, suggest tactics, and even help in developing and analyzing surveys. You should be able to find a librarian who can help track down the secondary data you need. Your local Chamber of Commerce or Cooperative Extension office can help identify the local resources available to help you in designing and carrying out your market research.

Of course, unless you are able to hire a consultant, you will have to do most of your own marketing homework yourself. But with some planning, some assistance, and some hard work, do-it-yourself market research will pay off in improving the odds for your new enterprise. And it is a skill that you will use over and over as your farm business grows into the future.

SUCCESSFUL MARKETING RESEARCH

The Complete Guide to Getting and Using Essential Information About Your Customers and Competitors

EDWARD L. HESTER

JOHN WILEY & SONS, INC.
New York • Chichester • Brisbane • Toronto • Singapore

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Fresh Grown Publicity

By

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Published by
F.E. Robbins & Sons Press
St. Louis, Missouri

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Cover by Direct Design A.S., Inc.
Original Design by Kelly Hobbs

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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 0-966168-9-8

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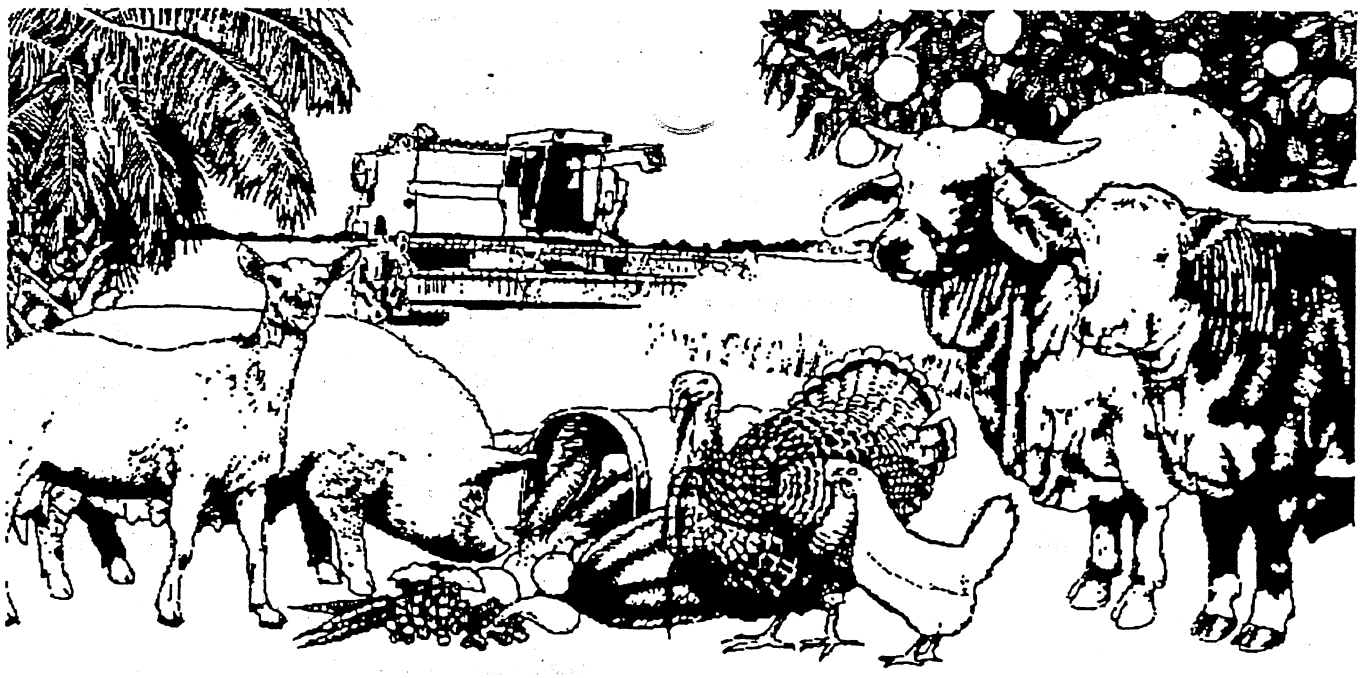

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Resource List attached

Many growers, especially new ones, are inclined to start production without giving a second thought to the business of marketing. Good marketing is an absolute must for a successful agricultural enterprise. Some would even argue that it ranks higher in importance than production itself—after all what good is a product if one cannot sell it consistently for a profit?

This publication describes direct marketing of produce (and to a lesser extent livestock) and lists additional resources for those who are interested in exploring it at greater depth. For more information on animal products, please ask for the ATTRA Information Package Marketing Organic Livestock Products. Some farmers may use direct marketing for particular products while simultaneously participating in traditional markets. No two growers are the same, and the reader will have to determine through trial and error what works best, or if it works at all.

Alternative marketing

There is little formal research on alternative marketing mechanisms. The information that does exist, mainly experiential and anecdotal, is generally dismissed as lacking viability. One possible reason for this may be the marginalization of small farmers, the heaviest users of innovative marketing methods, by the agricultural establishment (1). Assumptions are, however, slowly being challenged by the emergence of an alternative way of thinking. Farmers need not have to get big or get out, and it *is* possible for them to stay small or medium-sized *and* make a comfortable and successful living *within* the traditional agricultural sector (2).

Present system

Only 2% of the population farms, a fact often cited as proof of the extraordinary efficiency of U.S. agriculture. Technical strides in production and processing have made more food available to more people around the year. For better or for worse, farmers are constrained by a highly specialized system characterized by a few large farmers and processors, along with an army of middlemen who control the distribution of highly processed and packaged food.

Vertical integration of markets and consolidation of processing are especially pronounced in the livestock industry, where a handful of firms control broiler production, as well as hog, steer and heifer slaughter. Almost 100% of broiler production and 17% of hog production (an increase of 750% in 20 years) are done by contract (3). In many cases, the products are specified in such great detail in the contract that the farmer is not selling an agricultural product, but is selling his labor (4).

Exploring alternatives

Sustainable farming, which received a boost following the farm crisis of the 80s, has give rise to diversified, decentralized systems in which farmers take greater control of marketing by bypassing traditional channels and market directly to consumers at the local and regional level. Foods that do not require much processing before consumption—like fruits, vegetables and meat—are good for one-on-one marketing. Direct marketing is often quite unorthodox and takes the form of roadside stands, pick-your-own operations, farmers' markets, and sales to restaurants, upscale retail

When Mike and Jennifer Rupprecht sell beef direct to consumers, they make approximately $200 more per animal than if they had sold it to a large packing plant. Their consumers save at least $250 over what it would cost them to buy the equivalent amount in steak, roasts and hamburger in the store...
...The Minnesota Department of Agriculture estimates that in 1994, more than $31 million were generated through the state's 354 custom meat plants in sales and processing fees, from directly marketed meat. Of this, farmers received an estimated $22.1 million.

From The Land Stewardship Letter, November-December 1995.

or specialty stores, even supermarkets. The prospect of diversification is particularly promising at the rural-urban fringe, where producers can take advantage of specialty market niches and the demand for local and ethnic food and non-traditional products, *and* promote agricultural tourism and education to their advantage.

Why direct marketing?

It is the conventional marketing system that may have forced the return of direct marketing. Consumers tired of tasteless supermarket produce and factory-raised meat want fresh food with flavor and are willing to pay a premium price for it.

Direct marketing, also called "shopping with a human face," promises "vine-ripened tomatoes that won't bounce if dropped and are full of the flavor you remember (5)."

Direct marketing gives the farmer a larger share of the food dollar and a higher return on each unit sold. For some, adding value or marketing some minimally processed farm products directly to the consumer is a way of enhancing financial viability. Farmers who are unable to compete in, or are locked out of, distant markets, may run a thriving local business once they have established the right networks and connections. However, direct marketing is a hard and labor-intensive job requiring time and effort, creativity, ingenuity, sales expertise, and the ability to deal with people in a pleasant and positive manner. Producers must be absolutely sure they are ready for the job.

Importance of marketing

For too long, farmers have thought of marketing as simply how to dispose of their products. Locked into producing a very small number of major crops and insulated from the market, they are not required to have a clear understanding of consumer needs. They have traditionally taken whatever price they could get while the wholesale and retail distribution networks undertook the business of marketing.

For farmers working outside the conventional system, the importance of marketing cannot be over-emphasized. Consumer-focused marketing is the single most important factor that determines the success of an enterprise. Marketing is not just about selling. It requires a clear and astute understanding of what consumers want and delivering it to them through the most appropriate channels *for a profit*. It includes the planning, pricing, promotion and distribution of products and services that consumers, both present and potential, want or need. Marketing does not begin *after* production but well *before* the first seed is even planted. According to specialty vegetable grower Don Anderson: "Knowing what's happening in the marketplace is the difference between the farmer who makes it and the farmer who doesn't make it (6)."

Market development

There are four basic marketing ways to create a market (7). They are through:

✓ *market penetration*, where the producer uses more of the current product mix to meet the needs of the market. This could mean boosting sales by improving linkages between the buyer and seller and serving more customers in the existing market or by increasing consumption per customer.

✓ *market development*, where the producer looks for new uses or new markets for the product.

✓ *product development*, where a new product is

What are the qualities of a successful marketer?

Takes pride in the product and is not shy about saying so
Flexible
Creative
Not afraid to take risks
Willing to plan, research and experiment
Independent
Thrifty

From Market What You Grow by Ralph J. Hills, Jr.

produced for the same market. This could be something that is less expensive to produce, or value added to the original product or crop so that it meets the customer's needs better.
✓ *diversification*, where the grower raises new products for completely new markets.

Enterprise evaluation

A good marketing strategy begins with making sure the enterprise is right for you and is feasible. This will require a review and evaluation of your present situation, goals, possible enterprises, physical, financial and marketing resources, and market potential. The evaluation should help you answer some key questions, chiefly: Is this really what you want to do? Is there a market for the product? Do you have the necessary skills to do it? Are you going to develop the market? Or will you raise a crop for which there is a pre-existing market? Will it be profitable? Can you expand in the foreseeable future?

♠Start by listing your business and personal goals. Prioritize them.
♠Is this going to be a full-time enterprise?
♠Is your family involved and supportive?
Inventory physical resources like land, soil, machinery, water, buildings, livestock etc. Define constraints.
♠Foods that do not require much processing before consumption, like fruits, vegetables and meat, are good for one-on-one marketing
♠Is family and/or off-farm labor available? A spouse's knowledge of medicinal herbs or cooking could spin off into an additional on-farm enterprise.
♠Do you have access to financial resources in the form of savings, credit or investment by family or friends?
♠What are some of the crops that will grow well in your area and will fetch the price you need?
♠What are the marketing resources in your region? Check out the farmers' markets and the retail stores. Is a roadside stand feasible? Talk to others who have one. Are there restaurants, grocery stores and supermarkets willing to buy locally-raised produce or meat?
♠Who are your potential customers? Would they like to buy direct-marketed products or do they prefer buying at a mass retail store like Wal-mart or Krogers? Is there scope for consumer education? For recreational farming and tourism?
♠Do you have access to information and resources to help you along the way?

Market research

Following this preliminary survey, begin to identify and define your product. Get all the information you can about sources, marketing, production, processing, packaging and sales. This will require a good bit of systematic research. Check the libraries in your area. Read all the USDA and Extension publications you can lay your hands on as well as trade journals and periodicals, books on market gardening and seed catalogs.

Talk to your Extension agent, visit the local stores (gourmet and otherwise) and supermarkets to see what is selling, and why one product appears more appealing than another. Talk to customers, local stores, food clubs, specialty distributors, ethnic stores, restaurants and other prospective outlets in your region. What do they want? Is there an unfilled niche? With your production, labor and marketing resources, will you be able to fill this niche?

Find out what your prospective competitors are doing. Look for ways to improve upon that. Useful exercises for defining the competition and customer base can be found in Geraldine Larkin's book 12 Simple Steps to A Winning Market Plan (see section on Resources). For tips on researching the market for new farm-based enterprises, see the article by Judy Green called "Doing Your Own Market Research" (see resources section).

You can either start small and grow bit by bit, or you can start in a big way from the very beginning. Either way, you must be prepared to do your homework and get to know your markets to be successful. One way to identify potential markets that exist in your area is by

using the "30-mile market technique (8)." Most customers of direct marketers are believed to live within 30 miles of the point of business. Market research within this radius will unearth useful information about production possibilities and the presence of competitors. Detailed market analysis and research is imperative before you promote and sell your product. Not only does it reduce business risk by providing credible information, it can help identify problems in the market as well as little-known opportunities for profit. By knowing the size and make-up of your market, its geographic location, demographic and behavioral characteristics, it will be easier to create the appropriate marketing strategy and you will avoid wasting time and money marketing to the wrong people.

Why market research?

Information from market research helps to formulate a market strategy and project profitability. Two levels of information may be obtained:

General:

Food shopping habits;
What are some trends in lifestyles? convenience? Emphasis on family time and homecooked meals?
What is the ethnic and racial make-up of population, what are its food preferences?
What are the trends in food safety, health and nutrition?
What are the marketing trends? Growth in organics? An emphasis on freshness?

Specific:

Who are the buyers? What are their ages, incomes and lifestyles like?
What are their wants?
Size of the market, number of buyers;
Number of competitors; are they successful? What are their weaknesses?
What price can you expect?
How much of the market can you expect to hold?
What are packaging and labeling requirements?
What are the barriers to market penetration for the products you have in mind?

Domestic food demand - some trends to keep an eye on:

Demography: There will be fewer new U.S. households formed through the year 2010. There will be a greater proportion of single-person households as well as families without children. Households with two adults and one child will fall from 25% of the total to 20% over the next 15 years. This information implies larger demand for single-serve products and produce, and higher per capita food spending in one and two-person households.

Health and nutrition (9):

#1) Products perceived to be fresh will have the strongest competitive advantage. According to a survey reported in The Packer's 1997 supplement "Fresh Trends," 17% of the respondents had purchased one or more new fresh vegetables every year.
#2) Shoppers are looking for taste and may be less willing to compromise this for health. So, if a product is both healthy and tasty, it is guaranteed to be a winner.
#3) The buzzword in 1998 will be 'natural'. Since 1990, the claims natural and grown without pesticides are the only two labels that have grown in importance relative to others.
#4) Aging baby boomers will push new product positionings and define the market for health foods.
#5) More and more consumers will recognize the connection between nutrition and health.

Marketing plan

Because marketing is such an essential element of a direct marketing enterprise, it is important to recognize that the marketing environment will ultimately exert a strong influence on the nature of the business. The crop grown will be determined less by the farmer's personal tastes than by what the market will absorb at a price the farmer is willing to take. A good market plan broadly aims to define the consumer, the products or services they want, and the most effective promotion and advertising strategies for reaching those consumers (10). It clarifies objectives, appropriate actions, projected income, pricing structures, costs and potential profitability.

A market plan alone does not guarantee success, but it does indicate that many of the factors that affect the profitability and continued survival of the operation have been given consideration. A market plan is usually part of a larger business plan that includes production, financial, staffing and management plans. The process of writing a business plan is not within the scope of this paper but listed at the end of this section are resources to help you find more information on the subject. A good place to start is the Small Business Administration, a Federal agency that operates small business institutes and development centers, SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) and publishes business publications. Each state has an SBA office that may be approached for help with developing a marketing or business plan.

Elements of a marketing plan are (11):

✓*Marketing situation* is a summary of your present situation, what you are currently selling and how, who your customers are, what their needs are, your competition, your own strengths and weaknesses, how you are promoting your product, what the current food and marketing trends are, etc.

✓*Marketing objectives* are a summary of your short and long term goals, product diversification, additional market segments (alternative outlets) to tap. Objectives should be realistic and measurable, e.g. you would like to increase sales by 10% within the next year.

✓*Marketing strategies* are ways to achieve your goals, what you will produce, how you will promote and advertise the new product, the channels of sale, how you plan to beat your competition, how the product is priced and packaged and so on.

✓*Budgets* include estimated costs and return based on sales, and strategies for monitoring and curtailing costs.

✓*Action plan* describes immediate steps. (E.g. Look in the yellow pages for graphic artists to design logo, shortlist names of newspapers for a press release, assign person to deliver products to market, etc.)

✓*Evaluation* is a summary of progress on marketing objectives. The frequency of evaluation depends on the plan and could be each month, every six months or annually.

Objectives and strategies are a dynamic part of the planning process and change depending on the market situation and competition.

Niche marketing

Anyone can pick a bunch of vegetables or fruits, set up a stand at the local farmer's market *et voila!* a direct marketer is born. However, what is it that differentiates a successful marketer from the rest of the pack? James McConnon, Business and Economics Specialist at the University of Maine Coop Extension says that in order to survive in a world of mass retailers, it is absolutely imperative to find and fill a niche that is not filled by the mass retailer (Wal-Mart, K-Mart) (12). In addition, he lists three other survival strategies: good promotion, good service and good customer relations.

The following focuses on creative marketing tips, including specialty and value-added marketing, using examples of farmers who have built a successful direct marketing business.

What is a niche market?

- ✓A target group whose market responses are similar to each other, but different from other groups.
- ✓There must be accessible information about the group.
- ✓The group must be reachable through clearly identified information channels.
- ✓The group must be big enough and sufficiently profitable to make it worth targeting.
- ✓The nature of a niche market is that it tends to disappear after awhile. Frieda Caplan, whose company introduced the kiwi to America, stopped selling kiwis in 1990 because oversupply and falling prices had eliminated the niche.

Product differentiation

A very elementary way of differentiating one's product is to take it directly to the consumer. It is relatively easy for a direct marketer to promote their product as farm-fresh and different from the one sold at the mass retail store. Other ways to differentiate your product is by producing it earlier in the season, or by marketing it as low-spray (see box) or organic or naturally-raised, or by adding value to it in some other way. Cut flowers that are arranged into bouquets, garlic turned into decorative braids or wreaths, vegetables—rinsed, cleaned, cut and packed in plastic bags—are all simple ways to add value to products.

Beauty Only Skin Deep, says Orchardist

ATTRA specialist Guy Ames and wife Carolyn of Ames Orchard and Nursery market their apples as ecologically-raised. The Ames, who are committed to growing healthy food for the community, are forced to spray for the plum curculio, an insect they are unable to control entirely through organic means. They use Imidan once or twice during the season unlike conventional growers who rely heavily on more persistent pesticides spraying up to 12-14 times in the season for a cosmetically perfect product. Part of the Ames' marketing strategy is to educate consumers to disregard minor blemishes on fruit and instead appreciate its freshness and wholesome flavor. Buyers can get a taste of their produce at the Fayetteville, AR, farmers' market where they sell three times a week

(see resources section for publications on eco-labeling.)

Consumer concerns with pesticides in food, freshness, nutrition and flavor have turned the organic food movement into a multi-million dollar industry. The changing racial and ethnic mix of the population signals an increase in the demand for exotic and unusual vegetables and meats. Not least exciting of all is that people are rediscovering the pleasure of fresh ingredients from local farms—a more meaningful connection to the land (13).

The one advantage that direct marketers have over retailers is the ability to build their relationships with customers over time. Indeed, good marketing is *about* building trust and personal loyalty in the relationship. Good sellers know and use the customer's name. Consumers who feel an emotional bond to the grower are likely to remain loyal, even though the product is available at the grocery store at a cheaper price.

Marketing gimmicks will not hold customers unless accompanied by an excellent product and superior service. Conventional marketing wisdom has it that 80% of sales come from 20% of customer base. The grower must build a core customer base and let them know how important they are. Word of mouth advertising is the most effective and inexpensive way to attract new customers (14). Stay on top of consumer trends. The best-made product in the world will not sell if it isn't something people want.

Education of the consumer plays a big part in salesmanship. Most people, for instance, are oblivious to the environmental and health benefits of livestock raised on forage. Conveying information about the farm, how the product is raised and why it is raised the way it is, the effect of recent weather on the crops, and other farm-centered

conversation is important. Not only is this good for business, it also is a small step toward the development of consumer awareness of the farm and of social and health issues. Once customers know that you are providing healthy food, they gladly take upon the responsibility to support local farmers. Help *them* help *you* run your business successfully and profitably.

Write up your farm or company's mission statement and display it to your customers and employees. Let them know why you are in business and the direction you'd like to go. A simple mission statement may read like this: "Helping people stay healthy with fresh, locally grown food!"

Some resources you can use to educate the consumer about the benefits of fresh fruit, vegetable and meat are:

☎Nutrition Action Health Letter
Center For Science in the Public Interest
Suite 300, 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington DC 20009-5728
202-332-9110; e-mail cspi@cspinet.org
☎Cancer Information Service, National Cancer Institute
800-4CA-NCER
☎Produce For Better Health Foundation
1500 Casho Mill Road
Newark, DE 19711
302-738-7100
☎Mothers and Others
40 West 20 Street
New York, NY 10011-4211
Toll-free #: 888-ECO-INFO
(Its primary project aims to build demand for a better quality food system, to open the marketplace to make it more responsive to consumer needs, and to create market opportunities for regional,sustainably-produced foods.

An 'eggsample' of creative marketing!

According to Jeff Ishee, a farmer with many years of marketing experience under his belt, if only people knew how commercial layers are managed, they would be flocking to the local market to buy free-range or humanely produced eggs. Laid by hens that are allowed to roam free and have access to fresh air and a rich and varied diet, these eggs have a rich yellow yolk compared to the pale watery insides of factory-produced eggs, and a freshness and good taste that only old-timers recall from their childhood.

To take advantage of the market potential for farm-fresh eggs, talk to buyers about the differences between eggs raised naturally and those sold at the store. Explain why your product is nutritionally superior (a little research helps—see above box), present your point of view pictorially, display photographs of your hens and let the consumers connect. The education helps not just to aid in consumer awareness, it is also a great sales booster. People feel responsible for their health and recognize instinctively the value of your product and will be back for more. And they won't mind paying more for your eggs either!

The accompanying article "Mini-Farms, Maxi-Profits" describes an interesting mix of strategies devised by farmers Sinclair (now deceased) and Peterson to creatively market their produce at farmers' markets.

Specialty crops and diversification

Because an enterprise has a better probability of survival if it has a range of products to sell, diversification, especially into a mix of specialty or high-value crops will benefit producers, whether large or small. Specialty crops are generally not produced and sold in mass quantities. They have a high cash value per acre, grossing between $4000-$20,000 per acre. They are not necessarily exotic and include crops that need a lot of care to raise (and are therefore outside the traditional wholesale loop), crops with special attributes like vine-ripened tomatoes or lean meat or those raised especially for ethnic markets (15).

Niche marketing with grass-fed beef (16)

☞*The two defining characteristics that differentiate the Reeves from other beef cattle farmers are their product and market. When they first set out to direct market, they were determined to give the public an opportunity to eat the kind of beef they grew for themselves. Convinced that there was a niche market for clean, range-grown beef, they proceeded to sell a product that was free of unwanted chemicals, growth hormones, and antibiotics.*

The Reeves maintain that conventional wisdom does not apply in the marketing of grass-fed beef. Beef raised entirely on grass has the leanness of wild game and the flavor of sweet beef. It is not heavily marbled as is grain-fed beef. The cattle are butchered between the ages of 18-20 months—the younger the steer, the more delicate and tender the meat. Not much fat needs to be trimmed off the carcass and the beef is sold with cooking instructions and recipes.

It took some time and some "crushingly expensive mistakes" for the Reeves to learn how to tap into their niche market. Glossy advertising in the local tourist guides (Bon Appetit, Eureka Springs Dining Guide, Guide to Local Businesses), press releases and bulk mailings brought few or no sales. The poor response convinced them that they were better off addressing themselves exclusively to the small percentage of meat-eaters who frequent health food stores or similar establishments and who would buy organic meat. On the down side, of course, was the fact that many health food stores themselves steer clear of red meat because of perceived health risks. Their mission is now to:

> convince them that there are people out there who will joyfully eat clean, "range"- grown beef, precisely because of the health benefits. We show them photos, and describe the ranch and the lives of our cattle. We point out the obvious that beef is a very high-quality, nutrient-dense source of protein and obscure nutrients like B12, folic acid and zinc, that it is utterly delicious and deeply satisfying.

Today, their main wholesale outlet is the Ozark Cooperative Warehouse in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The warehouse itself markets only their ground beef but trucks orders to buying clubs—groups of private individuals in 11 states—and allows the Reeves to ship on their truck. This is an enormous bit of luck because it allows them to ship their product out of state for very little expense. The other, and more costly alternative, would be to use delivery services like UPS and Federal Express, which do not have freezer trucks and require insulated packaging.

Lisa notes that they really ought to invest more time and effort into in-store presentations and demonstrations. They've refrained from this partly because they do not wish to offend vegetarians present in the store and partly because they are still uncomfortable playing the role of salespeople.

Yet, store managers have found their obvious naiveté and lack of sophistication refreshing, their "hemming and hawing and just talking about their product" different from the spiel of professional sales people. The couple do not make "cold" calls but prefer to write a letter of introduction in advance before paying a visit to the store.

Their ideal marketing strategy would entail getting to know all the mainstream grocery stores with alternative clientele, and health food stores within a three-hour driving radius, contact them on a regular basis—perhaps weekly, bi-weekly or monthly—and keep the stores regularly stocked with their product. So far, they have been able to sell everything they produce without actively

marketing. Recently, they have been in contact with ranchers in Missouri and Arkansas who share their philosophy. The Reeves hope to buy some of their cattle or contract with them to grow beef animals, and expand the marketing end of their business soon.

Booker Whatley, a horticulturist from Alabama and a strong advocate of diversification and direct marketing, recommends that small farmers (those having 10–200 acres of land) with access to urban markets diversify into high-value specialty crops instead of raising high-volume, low-value crops like corn and soybeans (see section on 'Resources' for listing of his book). Montana-based growers Joan and Richard Wrench, who have been raising garlic as a specialty crop since 1971, are willing to help individual growers or groups wanting to establish a specialty crop enterprise with developing a market and business plan. They may be reached at 406-752-3127 between 8-9.30 am MST.

☞*James and Alma Weaver of Kutztown, Pennsylvania, grew tobacco and cattle on their 80-acre farm for several years before making the switch to specialty farming. The change has permitted them to survive in agriculture when other less flexible operators have been forced to bail out. The Weavers raise approximately 100 different kinds of herbs, a range of flowers, several varieties of ornamental colored corn, more than 100 varieties of peppers, 54 varieties of heirloom tomatoes, 30 different vegetables including some odd-sounding heirloom varieties like Cherokee Trail of Tears beans, Speckled Mennonite lettuce, and Amish Moon and Stars watermelons (17).*

☞*Steve Salt, a Missouri-based farmer who raises 600 kinds of vegetables, fruits, and herbs for sale at farmer's markets, restaurants, and via household subscriptions, is currently writing a book on specialty ethnic produce (18). Salt says that Asians, Middle-Easterners, Mediterranean Europeans, and Latin Americans, all of whom have a higher per capita consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables than Americans of north-west European heritage, also have a strong tradition of buying their produce unpackaged, at open air markets where they can examine or taste it before purchase. Supermarkets have been unable to cater to the needs of these people and Salt writes that raising produce for ethnic markets offers a promising specialty niche where the small grower can compete profitably with the big growers. In addition to direct retail sales, he recommends small-scale (wholesale) marketing to ethnic restaurants and grocery stores.*

Oriental vegetables encompassing a wide variety of Asian vegetables, and once a stronghold of the ethnic market, are more and more crossing over into the mainstream produce section. Primary markets are ethnic stores, grocery store chains and restaurants. Market data is hard to obtain partly because truck farmers who primarily raise these crops operate outside conventional channels. Some information on prices and availability may be obtained from The Packer and Produce Business (see resources). Frieda Caplan, an authority on specialty produce (see her home page at http://friedas.com/about.html) says that consumer education is extremely important in the specialties market. This is no less true of Oriental vegetables, the popularity of which has been fueled by ethnic restaurants and educational campaigns by retailers to demysticize the preparation of Asian foods through user-friendly packaging and recipes. For a brief summary on market potential, refer to the publication The U.S. Market For Miscellaneous Oriental Vegetables by Mihir Desai (listed in the Resources section).

Value-added marketing

Value-added is a relatively new term in direct marketing jargon. Simply put, it means processing or modifying the product through "cooking, combining, churning, culturing, grinding, hulling, extracting, drying, smoking, handcrafting, spinning, weaving, labeling, and packaging (19)". Growing something in a way that is acknowledged as safer, packaging or adding a component of information, education or entertainment are all ways to add value to a product. The customer is spared the additional work and the producer charges extra for adding

value. Take garlic, for example. Sold in bulk it sells for $4/lb. When braided, it may bring up to $7/lb as a decorative item. Adding value holds the promise of additional income especially in the off season, but it is certainly more labor-intensive and requires more management, more investment in equipment, and an awareness of legal and regulatory issues pertaining to on-farm processing. Value-added products do not have the same economies of scale as mass-produced goods and their success hinge heavily on the producer's retail strategy, especially advertising and promotion.

An alternative agricultural specialty currently attracting a great deal of attention is agritourism. Although not every family is willing or able to entertain the public, for those who enjoy meeting new people or hosting groups, a farm entertainment enterprise is a good opportunity for selling on-farm processed items.

A host of food safety laws governing the on-farm processing and sale of food must be complied with. Sanitation, kitchen equipment, garbage disposal, insect control and ventilation of processing kitchens are all regulated. Some states may require the lease of a professional processing or packaging facility. There are specific labeling requirements to be met and additional regulations may apply in the case of interstate sales. Regulations vary from state to state, so check with your state ag department for details.

An organization that can provide information on developing food products is the Institute of Food Technologists (see list of organizations for this and related resources). In some places, governments, university centers or non-profit organizations (examples that come to mind are Minnesota's Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, University of Nebraska's Food Processing Center, Iowa's Wallace Technology Transfer Foundation) assist rural micro-enterprise or other home-based food processing businesses in getting started. Agricultural departments have handbooks and guides for value-added food processing, technical assistance, funding opportunities, rules, responsibilities and market options.

Food processing incubators (FPI), in particular, are designed to help small-scale food processors. For a fee they provide commercial kitchen space and processing equipment and technical assistance with product formulation and packaging.

> ☞*In Humbold County, California, the Arcata Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) constructed the Foodworks Culinary Center to help develop micro industry in the region (20). The Center served as an incubator for 12 local gourmet and specialty food companies and includes 1000 sq. feet of shared commercial kitchen space in addition to each company's personal kitchen, 4000 sq. feet of warehouse space, and central office services. Products being made by the companies include baklava, pastas, Finnish coffee bread, smoked salmon and garlic cream cheese spread, tofu products, ice-cream and toppings, jams, flavored honey and chocolate confections. Tenants have formed a marketing cooperative and a mail order catalog featuring the products was made available to promote them all across the country.*

FPIs are a relatively new concept and very little is known about their economic impact. Duncan Hilchey at the Farming Alternatives Program (see list of organizations under Resources) is conducting case studies of four incubators to get a better understanding of their working and impact. His findings will be shared in a publication later in 1998. Meanwhile, those interested in exploring this subject further should get a copy of the publication called Establishing a Share-Used Commercial Kitchen from:

Bob Horn
Western Entrepreneurial Network
University of Colorado at Denver
Campus Box 128, PO Box 173364
Denver, CO 80217-3364
800-873-9378 (cost is $58 plus $4 s&h)

Mississippi's Southern Rural Development Center produced the Food Processing

Industry—Resource Directory as a step toward addressing food processing development issues in the southern region. Hard copies are available for $10 from the:

SRDC
Box9656
Mississippi State, MS 39762.
601-325-3207

Elizabeth Ryan, who sells a wide variety of value-added products like cider, fruit sauces, chutneys and salsa at farmer's markets in and around New York City says that one way to make on-farm processed goods more profitable is to allow farmers access to a commercial processing plant on a time-share basis. This kind of support has traditionally been unavailable to value-added enterprises, especially in the meat processing business. Small farmers with specialty meat products have great difficulty finding access to USDA-certified processing plants. Arkansas-based graziers Lisa and David Reeves searched for three years to locate a good USDA-inspected facility to process their direct-marketed beef. Large processors, although certified by the USDA, will not differentiate between the small farmer's product and the large volume of meat they process and are not a real option. USDA certification is mandatory for inter-state sales and in states that lack an inspection program (21).

Pricing and profitability

If you don't have a percentage of people walking away from you at market, you're selling too cheap, says Tim Kornder, a farmer from Belle Plaine, Minnesota. Setting a price is one of the more challenging tasks faced by the direct marketer. How does one know how much a pound of tomatoes or a head of lettuce is worth? On what information are these pricing decisions based? Knowing your costs of production, both fixed and variable, is the first step in pricing strategy. A break-even analysis lets you know exactly how much you need to sell just to cover your cost of production. The price is the mid-point between how much you have to make to cover your production and marketing costs and how much the consumer will pay. How much the consumer is willing to pay depends on the competition, the demand, the purchasing power of the buyer and the demand for the product (22).

In the long run, trial and error accompanied by unceasing research and observation, is the best teacher. The new grower can start the educational process by studying wholesale prices and comparing these with retail rates at the store. Some growers call wholesalers for current prices, others check in with local chefs and local retail stores, especially on comparable specialty items. Wholesalers usually mark up by 50% while retailers mark up by as much as 100% (23). This kind of information is useful in setting a realistic price for direct marketed products. Keep in mind that stores sell 'loss leaders,' items that are not marked up and only serve to draw buyers.

Beginning lessons in pricing strategies are often best learned at farmer's markets. Direct marketer Andy Lee says that he usually takes a quick walk around just before the market starts to note other displays and prices. Being the only organic grower at many of the markets he sells in, he marks his prices about 10% higher, especially if he sees that his products seem as good or better than the others. Lee's high prices may discourage some buyers but usually, he says, customers don't complain once they taste the "delicious homegrown goodies (24)."

In one survey of 3000 customers, people were asked to rate the eight most important factors in their decision to buy sweet corn. Price ranked fifth behind freshness and other quality considerations (25). Less than 15% of the sample thought price was a significant factor in purchasing corn. Roadstand growers who experimented with two piles of corn, one priced at $3.50 and the other at $3.00 found that the more expensively-priced corn sold out faster than the cheaper-priced corn. The reason may be that people perceived the higher-priced corn to be fresher (25). The above experiment may have turned out the way it did because of the

unique character of corn but it also suggests that price may not be the only consideration for a prospective buyer.

Growers emphasize the importance of setting a price at the beginning of the season and holding on to it. Customary pricing, as it is called, compels the buyer to disregard price and base their purchase on other considerations like want or value. Laurie Todd, a small-scale grower based in New York, says that people will pay top dollar only if quality and service is guaranteed (26). To attract consumers, he suggests giving samples so that people can taste the product, using attractive displays and packaging, and emphasizing the product's uniqueness over price. Like other growers, he does not recommend that you lower prices even when your competitors are reducing theirs. Full-time growers complain about hobby growers who don't price realistically and virtually give away their produce for free. Many markets try to educate growers not to undercut the next person. Clearly-marked prices are a must so customers know exactly how much a grower is asking for.

Growers who hold their price all season have the option of multiple unit pricing to move extra volumes or attract buyers wanting to buy in bulk for canning or freezing.

> ☞*Mark Brown of Brown's Provin Mountain Farm in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts tries to set retail prices twice as high as wholesale rates and says he likes to remain within "reasonable" range of store prices while making sure his production and sales costs are covered (27). In the event of lower prices, either from a sale or a market glut, Brown prefers to retain his base price and add extra value to his product instead of reducing his price. So, when the competition is selling corn for $2.75/dozen (0.23c an ear), Brown maintains his base price of 35c an ear and sells 6 ears for $2 with a seventh tossed in for free, or $3.75/dozen with two ears free. Brown finds that more people buy 14 ears for $3.75, and he still makes 4c/ear more than his competitors.*

Finally, this advice from growers:

- Don't sell your goods for a lower rate at the end of the day.
- Compete fairly on quality and service, never undercut;
- Don't badmouth other growers;
- Raise a good product and ask for a good price.

The USDA's market news service gives daily or weekly updates on wholesale produce/ herb/cut flower prices.
Contact:

USDA
AMS, F&V Division
Market News Branch, Room 2503
South Building,
PO Box 96456
Washington DC 20090-6456
http://www.ams.usda.gov/marketnews.htm

A privately published report called the Organic Market News is available for $65/year by mail and $75 by fax. Contact

Farmer's Information Network
PO Box 2067
Santa Clara, CA 95055
408-247-6778

Another is the Organic Food Business News Fax Bulletin available for $187 and published by:

Hotline Printing and Publishing
P.O. Box 161132
Altamonte Springs, FL 32716
407-628-1377

The CA-based federal-State Market News Service gives daily reports of prices and supplies, annual summaries of shipments and prices.

State Market News Service
1220 N Street
Room 126
Sacramento, CA 95814

For the East Coast, check out
http://aesop.rutgers.edu/www/aerdi/shipping.html

Direct marketing alternatives

Ordinarily, retail markets command the highest price per pound of the product, while wholesale markets move more of the product than retail markets but at lower prices. Farm sales and farmers' markets, U-pick, mail-order etc. are typically low volume markets. Restaurants, retail stores, cafeterias, health food stores, and caterers constitute mid-volume markets, where prices are better than wholesale but on the lower end of retail. Smaller farmers may find that sales to low and mid-volume markets works best for them. Mid-volume markets especially offer the advantage of small to medium crop production as well as medium to better prices (28).

Some direct marketing options are outlined here. State departments of agriculture or Extension Service may have published guidebooks outlining the laws and regulations for direct marketing in the state. Check with local authorities before starting.

Organizing and selling at farmers' markets

There has been an explosive growth in the number of farmers' markets around the country. In the mid-seventies, there were fewer than 300 markets in the United States. Two decades later, there are more than 2,400 farmers' markets, with approximately 1 million people visiting them each week. Several states have centralized information on farmers' markets, and a number of state-wide farmers' market associations have been formed. A comprehensive address list of farmers' markets is available on the Internet at http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/FarmMARKET/FMIndex.html. Guides for organizing and selling at farmers' markets are published by the Cooperative Extension Service in most states.

A guide to promotion and certification of farmers' markets, along with other publications on direct marketing, is available from the Hartford Food System (see Resources). Although the guide is somewhat dated, much of the information is still useful. Many states offer help in promoting locally grown fruits and vegetables, sometimes with a special logo. City government, tourist departments and chambers of commerce can often be enlisted to help promote farmers' markets.

Farmer's markets seem to work best for growers who have a wide variety of produce to sell of the type desired by customers. Today there are more types of consumers to match needs and wants with products. Consumers want markets to be easily accessible with good parking facilities. A little related entertainment never seems to hurt—seasonal festivals, street musicians, tastings, demonstrations, etc. Sales help must be pleasant and courteous, willing to answer questions.

Marketing specialist Bob Tritten says, "Don't be afraid to try new things, especially in displays and advertising. Take advantage of farm market meetings and tours to keep fresh ideas coming (29)." For additional information on farmer's markets, please call ATTRA.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) plans operate in several different ways. One involves a single farmer selling "subscriptions" or "shares" at the beginning of the season and then delivering, on a regular schedule, baskets of whatever is produced. Another method involves consumers who band together to rent land and hire a farmer to raise food for them. The CSA of North America (see list of Associations) can provide more information on how CSAs work, including a video, It's Not Just About Vegetables, and accompanying handbook. An e-mail networking list on CSA was started in February 1996 and subscription is free. To subscribe, send a message to:

listproc@prairienet.org.

In the body of the message, type subscribe csa-l followed by your first name and your last name. For a good overview of Community Supported Agriculture, ask for ATTRA's publication on CSAs.

On-farm sales and agri-tourism

On-farm sales include pick-your-own (U-pik) and roadside stands or farm markets. Such enterprises work best when farms are within thirty miles of a major population center, preferably on or near a good road. Pick-your-own is most adapted to crops which require stoop labor to harvest. Pick-your-own appeals to customers, mainly families, who have time and the necessary expertise to process their own foods in quantity. A U-pik operation is often combined with a farm market.

Plans and layout for farm markets are published in the NRAES booklet Facilities for Roadside Markets, available from Cornell and in Bypassing the Middleman, from Rodale Press (see Resources).

In order to induce customers to visit a farm, many farmers who market direct to the public find that "farm entertainment" enhances sales. Farms may offer tours, gift shops, rides, petting zoos, personalized pumpkin patches, festivals, food services, or classes—in addition to the expected parking, restrooms, harvesting instructions, creative signage, and playgrounds. Adequate liability insurance must, of course, be in place. In some areas of the country, fee hunting is combined with farming.

One Nebraska farmer combines fee hunting with hunting lodge accommodations (and a gift shop) during the slow winter season on his 1500-acre grain farm. A publication of interest is Agritourism in New York: Opportunities and Challenges in Farm-Based Recreation and Hospitality, available from Cornell Media Services at Cornell University (607-255-2080) for $13.20. For more information, ask for ATTRA's fact sheet on this subject.

Selling to restaurants and stores

High quality is a prime requisite for restaurant sales. Such specialty crops as herbs, garlic, mushrooms, salad greens, cut flowers, and edible flowers for restaurants may be grown on very small parcels of land. A newsletter may be used to keep restaurants (and other customers) informed about what will be available soon. For additional information on marketing to restaurants and specialty stores, call ATTRA.

Mail order and home delivery

Mail order sales generally involve value-added products or (primarily in Florida and the West Coast) fresh fruits. Value-added products are often decorative, rather than culinary. Home delivery of fresh farm products was much more common in the U.S. fifty years ago than it is today. The sight of a horse-drawn farm wagon loaded with bushels of apples, squash, potatoes, and live chickens making its way slowly through a residential neighborhood while the farmer (or his children) knocked on doors was not unusual. But it is still possible for farmers to meet consumers at the doorstep and deliver quality food. This method is currently most used by dairy and meat producers. Nowadays arrangements are made in advance by telephone and meats are usually frozen. Some CSAs home deliver.

Resources

Included in this package is a list of resources—Extension publications, books, newsletters—for your information. Cooperative Extension at Pennsylvania State University has published the Farmer's Guide to Marketing Resources, which includes separate sections for specific kinds of producers (see resource list below). Periodicals which inform small farmers and specialty growers on direct marketing options include The Business of Herbs, Small Farm Today, Growing for Market, and the new electronic publication Sustainable Farming Connection at http://sunsite.unc.edu/farming-connection.

A variety of conferences on marketing and agriculture are held every year around the country. The largest is the national North American Farmers' Direct Marketing conference held at the beginning of each year. Next year's (1999) conference will be held on February 18-23 in Grand Rapids, MI. For information on

conferences or proceedings, contact Charlie Touchette toll-free at 1-888-884-9270. For this year's conference, look up the Internet at www.agf.gov.bc.ca/agric/nafdmc/dfmchome.htm. Information on the annual Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference, usually held in mid February, may be obtained from Dr. Ramu Govindasamy at Rutgers Coop Extension at 732-932-9171, ext. 25.

Promotion and publicity

Promotions help to increase sales per customer and the number of clients, and enhance the image and visibility of the farm, company and/or product. For an overview of promotion strategies and advertising, refer to Sell What You Sow, and Extension publications like A Guide to Successful Direct Marketing (see Resources). Promotions come in different shapes and sizes but they all have some common characteristics.

- They draw attention and communicate information;
- They provide an incentive or concession to the consumer;
- They invite the consumer to buy.

Word-of-mouth advertising by satisfied customers is priceless and cannot be purchased or engineered except by providing good service and a good product. Because an estimated 80% of your business comes from past buyers, focus on rewarding loyal customers by offering discounts, gift certificates or a free service.

Coverage by the local newspaper or radio/television station can bring in more sales than any paid advertisement. The media is looking for news to report and events on the farm will definitely lure the reporter in search of a story with a news angle. A Halloween festival for children is news. The availability of a new and unusual food item is news. A cider-tasting contest is a community event and is news. Invite the food editor over for a dinner of grass-fed beef, or pastured chicken so she/he can taste the difference. While writing up a press release, look for the news peg that makes the story: a success story, an accomplishment, an award, anything that seems interesting or valuable to the community. Give the press plenty of notice, good photo opportunities, and always return phone calls.

Paid advertising is the non-personal promotion of an idea, product or service directed at a mass audience. Its aim is to generate an increase in sales, induce brand recognition and reinforce the 'unique selling point' (remember the Energizer Bunny?), inform potential customers about the availability of a product, and create demand for that product. An advertisement should emphasize benefits, not objects. What will people get from your product or from a visit to your farm? High-quality, fresh, delicious produce or meat? Family fun? Friendly service? You can either advertise continuously through the season to maintain your presence in the marketplace, or you can advertise just before a product is available.

Advertising budgets generally range between 4 to ten percent of sales. Let's say, you rely heavily on radio spots (up to 60%) for continual advertising during the six months you are open (30). If projected sales are $50,000 and you commit 4% to the advertising budget, this means you have $2,000. If 60% is allocated to continual advertising through the marketing season, you have $1,200 for that period. The balance of $800 would be allocated to each of those six months depending on the percentage of seasonal sales that occurs in that month. If 50% of sales occurs in July, then $400 would be allocated to that month over and above the base budget for April. This amount can be used for other forms of promotion like direct mailings, or newspaper ads etc. If competition is high, ad budgets may need to increase. Re-evaluate an ad campaign if it does not bring about a quick increase in sales.

Attractive road signage is another effective form of advertising. Signs that are legible to the speeding motorist are a way to induce people to stop and visit the roadside market or farm-stand. Signs should have a logo and should reflect the kind of goods being sold—more

upscale if they are high-priced and a 'no-frills' sign if otherwise. Signs that advertise an unusual or out-of-the ordinary product will draw the curious to the farm. The first sign should be placed a good distance (at least 2500 feet) before the market to give the motorist time to decide whether or not to stop. Keep signs neat and well-maintained.

Direct mailing is advertising with a personal touch and requires an up-to-date and extensive mailing list. Postcards with pictures of your farm, a logo and a promotional message may be sent just before a farm festival or when produce is available. Direct mailing is only as effective as the people to whom it is sent.

Mailing lists should be revised each year. Target groups of people likely to buy your product (e.g. members of a health food store). A mailing list can be developed by asking people to sign up for mailings. Also, ask them where they heard about your product or farm. This information will help you plan future advertising.

☞*Peggy Frederick of Strawberry Valley Farm in Whitney Point, New York, mails customers a specially-designed card listing the vegetables and strawberries available for U-pick. For Christmas, she sends out the 'giftbox' brochure which lists gift items from the farm's bakery and consignment gift shop.*

The advantages of advertising mail are that it can target and reach new customers, while maintaining the loyalty of existing ones. It is also a great way to cross-sell.

☞*In her catalog, Ellie MacDougall, a Maine-based grower, inserts a little promotional mailing on behalf of the local turkey grower, who in turn sells her poultry and turkey stuffing seasonings (31). Many of her seasonings and vinegars are cross-sold by produce growers at other markets and farm stands.*

The catalog is a marketing tool that serves many purposes. Common elements of a catalog are (32):

- ✓ It should *tell a story.* It should differentiate your business from others and explain why and how you are different.
- ✓ It should *work like a reference,* providing detailed information about the product, service and business.
- ✓ It should *be a sales tool.* In addition to providing information, it must promote your product, service and business.
- ✓ It should *create a good first impression.*

Business cards have a way of sticking around in people's wallets long after they have been distributed. Print and hand out business cards with your name, phone number, farm location and product.

The Internet offers a world of marketing opportunities. Its key features are 24-hour accessibility by anyone with Internet capabilities, a level playing field for both big and small producers, and greatly expanded reach without the costs and limitations of direct mail. Browsers can actually shop on-line and mail-order products and services. But marketing electronically is hard work, as one herb producer says.

☞*Within six months of setting up a Web page and beginning an e-mail newsletter, Gene Gage of Papa Geno's Herbs found that plant orders from the Internet had surpassed those from his traditional mail-order catalog (33). Size of the average order through the Internet was higher. Gage sends his e-mail newsletter out 15 times a year. Advertising on e-mail is cheaper, he says. It would cost him 50 cents to send a post card to each customer. Direct mailings to 40,000 people would cost him $20,000. The same people, assuming they had access to a computer, could be reached by e-mail for $5. Each day he receives 100 messages via e-mail. These are in addition to the orders that an employee takes in from her home. The hard work involves spending 20-40 hours a week online, for business and "schmoozing." Gage is constantly on the lookout for links to add to his web page and spends hours giving advice free of charge as resident herb expert of American Online and the gardening site GardenEscape. One disadvantage is that he has had several bad checks from customers*

off the Internet, a problem he has never had to face in retail and paper catalog sales.

The first North American Agricultural Internet Marketing Conference "Internet Goes Ag, Making it Work For You!" was held in October 1996, in Chicago.

A lively and regular newsletter, written in the first person, discussing upcoming produce, recipes, farm events and life on the farm, makes the reader feel more involved and connected. Ideas for content may come from customers or from employees.

☞*Cass Peterson and Ward Sinclair (now deceased), who farmed with great flair and ingenuity for several years, published an annual newsletter for subscribers to their CSA called The Groundhog Report. With just the right touch of wry humor, the publication put together by the former Post reporters informed consumers about prices, tips on cooking vegetables, news from the farm and quotable quotes.*

When creating a newsletter, consider the following (34):

- What are the items being promoted?
- What should you say to induce readers to buy it?
- Are readers made to feel included and important?
- Have all the necessary details like farm hours, phone #, deadlines, etc. been included?
- Is the newsletter uncluttered and visually pleasing?

Including a map of how to get to the farm is always helpful. Newsletters may also be sent to the news media or published as an insert in the regional newspapers.

☞*Kimberly Rector, formerly of Angelic Organics, a biodynamic farm north-west of Chicago used packaging to promote and educate people about the product (35). An artist by training, Rector chanced upon a motif for the farm, and used it on specially crafted paper labels with the farm logo and information about the product, on packaging for specialty items such as herbs, on signs designed for the farm stand and at the farmers' markets, and on specially-designed point of purchase posters. The posters increased demand for produce, and Rector recommends retail packaging as a plus for farmers' markets and sales to stores.*

Single event promotions like harvest festivals, Easter egg hunts, and Halloween costume contests can be combined with ongoing promotions like school tours or Friday happy hours or open house. Publicize the promotions well ahead to ensure a good turnout.

☞*The Lost Nation Orchard and Cider Mill is a good example of the use of a mix of sales strategies. In addition to creating a striking cider label with a logo, and stating their presence on store shelves, partners Michael Phillips and David Craxton promote Lost Nation as a community farm (36). People trade labor for cider, helping to pick wild apples, label jugs or dig planting holes for new orchards. Phillips and Craxton write occasional press releases, always making sure of a news angle - such as apple tastings, harvest festivals, or providing early-season tips to growers. They also run ads regularly in these newspapers. The format generally remains the same, but photographs and text may vary. Advertising budgets average 5% of gross receipts. The idea behind their marketing strategy is to promote the experience of authentic country life, its fun and friendliness and generosity of spirit, in their advertisements, their brochures, at their annual harvest festival, at the school tours hosted on Friday mornings, and on the Lost Nation trading cards - educational cards with a little snippet of information that is handed to the consumer with each purchase. All in all, it makes for a wonderful tourist experience. The ideas, the insight and the creativity behind the marketing package, says Phillips, happened only because they loved and believed in what they were doing.*

Conclusion

Finally, some parting advice to people considering direct marketing or processing of farm products. First of all, do something you love and enjoy doing. Success will follow.

Invest time and, if necessary, money in research. Try to have a well-considered plan before proceeding but don't be rigid. Learn as you go. Start small and keep your costs and debt as low as possible. Provide a reliable supply of good-quality products and build a good relationship with your customers. Take time to listen to their wants, identify market possibilities and find a unique market niche for your product. Ensure diverse markets, so that if one fails, you can fall back on the others. Set a fair price and avoid competing directly with big business, especially on price.

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March 1998

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The first place to look for publications on direct marketing and small business development is your state Extension office. Some university and extension publications are listed below.

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Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
PO. Box 736
Hartington, NE 68739.
Ph: 402-254-2289.

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Packer, The (ed.) 1997. The Packer's Produce Availability and Merchandising Guide. The Packer, Lenexa, Kansas.
Information about display and promotion, post-harvest handling of major vegetable and fruit crops.
Contact:
The Packer 1997 Guide
Circulation Department
10901 West 84th Terrace
Suite 20, Lenexa, KS 66214.
Ph: 800-255-5116.
Visit http://www.thepacker.com. The 1998 guide will be available in June.

Richards, Keith and Wechsler, Deborah S. 1996. Making It On The Farm. Increasing Sustainability Through Value-Added Processing and Marketing. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. For copies, send check for $12 payable to
SSAWG Publications
PO Box 324
Elkins, AR 72727

Rocky Mountain Institute (ed.) 1987. "Marketing," How To Survive As A Small Farmer. Rocky Mountain Institute. 40 p.
Rocky Mountain Institute
1739 Snowmass Creek Road,
Snowmass, CO 81654

Salatin, Joel. 1995. Salad Bar Beef. Polyface, Inc., Swoope, VA. 368 p.

Salatin, Joel. 1993. Pastured Poultry Profits. Polyface, Inc., Swoope, VA. 330 p.

Schwenke, Karl. 1991. Successful Small-Scale Farming: An Organic Approach. Storey Communications, Inc., Pownal, VT. 134 p.

University of California (ed.) Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook. Publication #3346. Division of Ag. and Natural Resources, Oakland, CA.

Other general publications: (continued)

Available from the Small Farm Center for $30 (see list of organizations for address).

Shepherd, Renee and Raboff, Fran. 1994. Recipes From A Kitchen Garden. Shepherd's Garden Seeds, Felton, CA. 161 p.
Available at bookstores or from
Shepherd's Garden Seeds
30 Irene Street
Torrington, CT 06790-6658.
Ph: 860-482-3638.

Staines, Ric. Market Gardening. Fulcrum Publishing, Golden, CO. 192 p.
Send $14.95 plus $2 shipping and handling to
Fulcrum Publishing
350 Indiana Street
Ste. 350, Golden, CO 80401.
Ph: 800-992-2908 or 303-277-1623.

Wallin, Craig. 1989. Backyard Cash Crops: The Sourcebook for Growing and Selling Over 200 High-Value Specialty Crops, Homestead Design, Inc., Friday Harbor, WA. 231 p.

Wampler, R. And Motes, J. 1985. Pick Your Own Farming; Cash Crops For Small Acreages, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma.

Whatley, Booker T. 1987. How To Make $100,000 Farming 25 Acres. Regenerative Ag. Association, Emmaus, PA. 1987.
Focuses on location, crop selection and mix, and marketing. Gives insight on marketing strategies, equipment, high value crops. Available for $22.50 from:
American Botanist Sellers
P.O. Box 532, Chillicothe IL 61523.
Ph: 309-274-5254; FAX: 309-274-6143.

Articles:

Aylsworth, Jean D. 1989. State promotions offer new marketing opportunities. American Vegetable Grower. September. p. 27-29, 59-63.

Brandon, Ian and Gillian. 1994. Federal program for needy also benefits growers. Growing for Market. June. p. 5.

Bycznski, Lynn. 1994. Farm's newsletter inspired sales of the unusual. Growing for Market: The Best of 1993. [reprt. of articles that first appeared in Growing for Market] p. 14.

Rogak, Lisa Angowski. 1993. Selling your own specialty foods. Country Journal. November-December. p. 28-31.

Schillen, Joyce. 1992. Taking food stamps is good for business, good for the community. Growing for Market. September. p. 8-9.

Associations:

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
National Ag. Library
10301 Baltimore Avenue, Room 304
Beltsville, MD 20705-2351
Ph: 301-504-6559;
E-mail: afsic@nal.usda.gov

Hartford Food System (Mark Winne)
509 Wethersfield Ave.
Hartford, CT 06114
Ph: 860-296-9325; FAX: 860-296-8326

Farming Alternatives Program
17 Warren Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Ph: 607-255-9832

Food and Agricultural Products Research and Technology Center
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK
The Center's objective is to help develop successful value-added enterprises in OK. For a free fax subscription to the Food Fax Newsletter, fax a request to Peter Muriana at 405-744-6313 or call him at 405-744-5563.

Associations: (continued)

Food Processing Center
University of Nebraska
60 Filley Hall
Lincoln, NE 68583-0928
Ph: 402-472-5791
Contact Allis Burney

The Entrepreneur Assistance Program helps prospective manufacturers with issues like product development, food safety, market research and selection, packaging and label design, business risk protection, product pricing, image development, regulatory issues, etc.

Institute of Food Technologists
221 N. LaSalle St., Suite 300
Chicago, IL 60601
Ph: 800-IFT-FOOD

Missouri Alternatives Center
628 Clark Hall
Colombia, MO 65211
Ph: 573-882-1905 or 800-433-3704

Provides information on alternative crops, small farm options and alternative rural opportunities.

National Farmers Direct Marketing Association
14850 Countryside Drive
Aurora, OR 97002
Ph: 503-678-2455

Organic Farmer's Marketing Association
8364 S. State Road 39
Clayton, IN 46188
Ph: 317-539-6935; E-mail: cvof@iquest.net

Publishes The Organic Organizer.

Restorative Development Initiative
Collective Heritage Institute
826 Camino de Monte Rey, Suite A6
Sante Fe, New Mexico 87505
Ph: 505-986-0366; FAX 505-986-1644

Program linking family farmers, including native American growers, directly with progressive companies and markets to facilitate the creation of an alternative agricultural economy outside the commodities market.

Small Farm Center
University of California
Davis, CA 95616-8699
Ph: 916-752-8136

Published the Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook that describes seed sources, cultivation, production and marketing alternatives for 62 crops. A bimonthly newsletter called Small Farm News is also published. Also available are Considerations in Enterprise Selection, How to Determine Your Cost of Production, Direct Marketing and Quality Control, Marketing Cooperatives, and Setting Up a Roadside Stand, three booklets that cover marketing opportunities for small farmers, and the Small Farm Handbook (169 pp, $24.55) an easy to follow book for prospective farmers, new farmers and farmers who want to start new enterprises.

USDA/RBS Program
Stop 3201, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-3201
Ph: 202-690-4730

(Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) helps farmers and other rural residents develop cooperatives to obtain supplies and services at lower cost and to get better prices for the products; advises rural residents on developing existing resources through cooperative action to enhance rural living; helps cooperatives improve services and operating efficiency; informs members, directors, employees, and the public on how cooperatives work and benefit their members and their communities; and enclurages international cooperative programs. RBS also publishes research and educational materials, including the Farmer Cooperatives magazine).

Periodicals:

Acreage Advisor
15400 N 56th St.
Lincoln, NE 65814-9706
Ph: 402-785-2220

Bimonthly 24-page publication geared toward the small farm and acreage owner. One year subscription is $9.95. Contact Phil Pfeiffer.

American Fruit Grower
American Vegetable Grower
Meister Publishing Co.
37733 Euclid Avenue
Willoughby, OH 44094
Ph: 216-942-2000

Periodicals: (continued)

The Business of Herbs
439 Ponderosa Way
Jemez Springs, NM 87025-8036
505-829-3448; FAX 505-829-3449
E-mail: olives @jemez.com
Bimonthly, $20 per year.

Country Journal
P.O. Box 500
Mt. Morris, IL 61054

Farm Direct Marketing Digest
P.O. Box 4612
Pasco, WA 99302
Ph: 509-547-5538; FAX 509-547-5563

Farmers Market Monthly and Farmers Market Outlook
PO Box 4220
Culver City, CA 90231
Ph: 310-673-8366
Bi-monthly newsletters on California's farmers markets. Carries farmer profiles, updates on new crops, legal and regulatory issues, interviews with chefs, authors, policy-makers and others with and interest in farmers markets. Annual subscription costs $20.

Farming Alternatives Newsletter
c/o Farming Alternatives Program
17 Warren Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Ph: 607-255-9832

Gourmet News
PO Box 1056
Yarmouth, ME 04096

The Gourmet Retailer
3301 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Suite 300
Coral Gables, FL 33134
Ph: 305-446-3388

Growing for Market
Fairplain Publications
P.O. Box 365
Auburn, KS 66402
Subscription is $24/yr.

Labels: Linking Consumers and Producers
Free monthly electronic newsletter from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy that provides news, events and resources related to the labeling of products for environmental, social and regional sustainability. To sunscribe, send e-mail to majordomo@igc.apc.org. Leave subject blank. In body, type subscribe label-news.

MFA Marketing Digest
Minnesota Food Association
2395 University Avenue, Room 309
St. Paul, MN 55114
Ph: 612-644-2038
Contact: Anne deMeurisse
Reports information of interest to small-scale food producers and processors who are creating a sustainable food system in Minnesota. Features profiles of producers, processors and buyers.

Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener
PO Box 2176
283 Water Street
Farrell Building, 4th Floor
Augusta, ME 04338
Ph: 207-622-3118
The March-May issue 1996 is full of marketing and production ideas from the Farmer-to Farmer conference. Back issues are available for $4.50.

The Packer
10901 West 84th Terrace
Suite 20
Lenexa, KS 66214
Ph: 800-255-5116
Gives weekly news about marketing and production of fruits and vegetables. Produces The Packer's Produce Availability and Merchandising Guide with information on vegetable and fruit crops, display and promotion, post-harvest handling, major production areas and other useful details.

Produce Business
Phoenix Media Network
P.O. Box 810425
Boca Raton, FL 33481
Ph: 561-447-0810
A monthly magazine available for $48. Ask for Fran.

Periodicals: (continued)

Rural Enterprise
P.O. Box 878
Menomonee Falls, WI 53052-0878
Ph: 414-255-0100
(discontinued but some back (1986-1992) issues still available. $3 each.)

Small Farm Digest
USDA-CSREES
Mail Stop 2220
1400 Independence Avenue S. W.
Washington, DC 20250-2220
Ph: 800-583-3071; FAX 202-401-5179
smallfarm@reeusda.gov
Free quarterly newsletter on farm-related trends and developments, announcements,e tc. Also available from this office is the "Getting Started in Farming" series and other factsheets. See http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm.

Small Farm Today
3903 Ridgetrail Road
Clark, MO 65243-9525
Ph: 800-633-2535

Specialty Crop Digest
Homestead Design, Inc.
P.O. Box 1058
Bellingham, WA 98227
Ph: 360-676-5647

Stockman Grass Farmer
P.O. Box 2300
Ridgeland, MS 39158-2300
Ph: 800-748-9808

University of Wisconsin Coop Extension
Direct Marketing Newsletter
c/o John Cottingham
Ag. Marketing Specialist
717 Pioneer Tower
University of Wisconsin, Platteville
Platteville, WI 53818-3099
Ph: 608-342-1392

Publishers:

Acres USA
P.O. Box 9547
Metairie, LA 70011
Ph: 800-355-5313

Good Earth Publications
PO Box 898
Burlington, VT 05482
Ph: 802-425-3201
goodearth@igc.apc.org

New World Publishing
3037 Grass Valley Highway #8185
Auburn, CA 95602
Ph: 916-823-3886

Rodale Press
33 E. Minor Street
Emmaus, PA 18098

Videos and Audios:

High-Value Marketing. 1992. Farmer-To-Farmer Series. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA.
To order, send $29.95 to:
Farm Videos, c/o Rooy Media
7407 Hilltop Drive, Frederick, MD 21702
Ph: 301-473-8797
Contact Rooy Media for other titles in the series.

Gerber, Michael. 1995. The E Myth Seminar. Nightingale-Conant Corp., Niles, IL
(Six sound cassettes on how to run a business. Suggests that most businesses are started by people who want to turn a beloved interest into an occupation.)

Miscellaneous:

Foodline is a trio of databases providing international coverage of food marketing, technical and regulatory information. Foodline: International Food Market Data is a bibliographic database of global market information from approximately 250 food and beverage and related publications, Foodline: Food Science and Technology, which consists of abstracts from over 550 journals, books, reports and papers; and Foodline: Current Food Legislation, a

Miscellaneous: (continued)

database summarizing provisions of current food additive regulations and food composition and labeling standards for the U.S. and seven European Union countries.

The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association started a bi-weekly price report in 1996. Prices are compiled by interviewing 20 farms about what they are charging for currently available organic produce. Items for which retail and wholesale prices are listed include vegetables, berries, tree fruit, herbs, bunched flowers, seedlings, and organic meats.Report available by mail for $10 per season from:

MOFGA,
PO Box 2176,
Augusta, ME 04338.

The Massachusetts Department of Ag. Has information on farmers' markets and direct marketing, mail order businesses at their website www.massgrown.org

New Crop Resource Online Program at http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop provides a look at new and specialty crops.

A discussion group about marketing is available on the Internet. To subscribe to direct-mkt, send the following message to majordomo@reeusda.gov subscribe direct-mkt

For a similar discussion group for small farmers, send message to majordomo@reeusda.gov Leave subject blank. In the body, type: subscribe smallfarm-mg

Organic Farmers Marketing Association web site has a public page and a private page where certified organic farmers can discuss markets, prices and other subjects. The private page is open only to members of the Organic Farmers Marketing Association. Send $25 to:

OFMA
PO Box 159
La Farge, WI 54639
Or look up http://www.iquest.net/ofma/

SMALLFARM-MG is a listserve that identifies small farm contacts, farmers and others interested in strengthening the capacity of small and mid-size farmers to improve their income through a systems approach. To subscribe, send mail to majordomo@reeusda.gov. Leave subject blank. In the body, type subscribe smallfarm-mg Sustainable Farming Connection is an interactive website with innovative production and marketing information. Visit http://sunsite.unc.edu/farming-connection

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Prepared by Radhika Balasubrahmanyam
ATTRA Information Specialist

March 1998

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By Katherine Adam, Radhika Balasubrahmanyam, and Holly Born
NCAT Agriculture Specialists
November 1999

The PDF version of this document is available at
http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/directmkt.pc
36 pages — 698 kb

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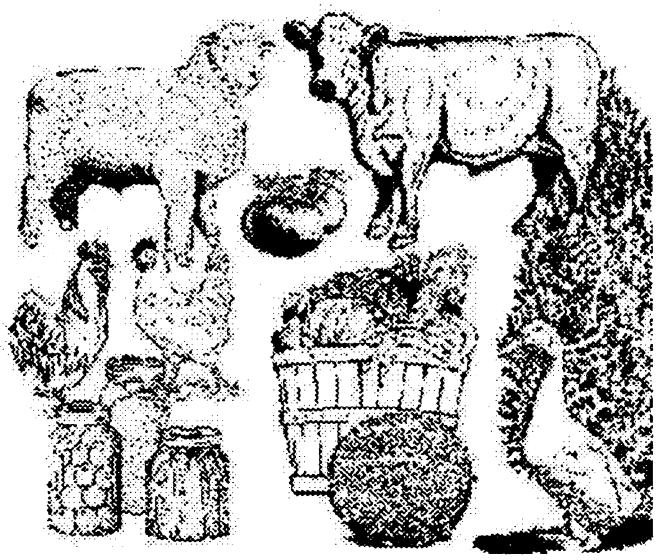
- Videos and Audios
- Databases and Listserves



Abstract

This publication on direct marketing alternatives—with emphasis on niche, specialty and value–added crops—features many farm case studies, as well as information on enterprise budgets and promotion/publicity. A new section discusses implications of Internet marketing and e–commerce for agriculture.

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Introduction

Many growers, especially new ones, are inclined to start production without giving a second thought to the business of marketing. Good marketing is an absolute must for a successful agricultural enterprise. Some would even argue that it ranks higher in importance than production itself—especially for farmers planning to diversify. After all, what good is a product if one cannot sell it consistently for a profit?

Diversification out of commodity crops may mean becoming familiar with, or even creating, new marketing systems. Existing marketing channels very often do not accommodate the new producer well—especially the small producer.

This publication describes direct marketing of produce (and to a lesser extent livestock) and lists additional resources for those who are interested.

ATTRA has more information on marketing animal products. Some farmers may use direct marketing for particular products while simultaneously participating in traditional markets. No two growers are the same, and the reader will have to determine through trial and error what works best.

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Alternative Marketing

Formal research on alternative marketing mechanisms has been scattered and hard to access by producers. It is mostly experiential and unrecognized by the agricultural establishment and official information channels. Small farmers and grassroots farm groups are the most likely to develop and use innovative marketing methods (1). The assumption that farmers must either "get big or get out" is being challenged, however, by the emergence of alternatives. It is possible for innovative farmers to stay small or medium–sized and make a comfortable and successful living from agriculture (2).

> When Mike and Jennifer Rupprecht sell beef direct to consumers, they make approximately $200 more per animal than if they had sold it to a large packing plant. Their consumers save at least $250 over what it would cost them to buy the equivalent amount in steak, roasts and hamburger in the store...
>
> ...The Minnesota Department of Agriculture estimates that in 1994, more than $31 million were generated through the state's 354 custom meat plants in

sales and processing fees, from directly marketed meat. Of this, farmers received an estimated $22.1 million.

From The Land Stewardship Letter, November-December 1995.

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Present System

Less than 2% of the U.S. population farms, a fact often cited as proof of the extraordinary efficiency of U.S. agriculture. Technical strides in production and processing have made more food available to more people around the year. For better or for worse, farmers are constrained by a highly specialized system characterized by a few large farmers and processors, and a production and distribution system increasingly integrated at all levels for the sake of efficiency and economies of scale.

Vertical integration of markets and consolidation of processing are especially pronounced in the livestock industry, where a handful of firms control broiler production, as well as hog and cattle slaughter. By 1996, almost 100% of broiler production was by contract (3). Since 1996 hogs sold to packers by "pre–arranged agreements" (contracts) have increased from 17% to over 60%, according to a study by agricultural economist Glenn Grimes of the University of Missouri (4). In many cases, the products are specified in such great detail in the contract that the farmer is not selling an agricultural product, but is selling his labor (5).

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Exploring Alternatives

Sustainable farming, which received a boost following the farm crisis of the 1980s, has given impetus to diversified, decentralized systems in which farmers take greater control of marketing by bypassing traditional channels and marketing directly to consumers at the local and regional level. Foods that do not require much processing before consumption—like fruits, vegetables and meat—are ideal for one–on–one marketing. Direct marketing is often quite unorthodox and may take the form of roadside stands, pick–your–own operations, farmers' markets, and sales to restaurants, upscale retail or specialty stores—even supermarkets and institutional food service. Prospects for direct farmer–consumer interaction are particularly promising at the rural–urban fringe, where producers can take advantage of specialty market niches and the demand for local and ethnic food and non–traditional products, while promoting agricultural tourism and education.

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Why Direct Marketing?

It is the excesses of the conventional marketing system that have forced the return of direct marketing. Consumers tired of tasteless supermarket produce and factory–raised meat (and with increasing concerns about food safety issues) want fresh food with flavor, as well as more control over their food supply, and are willing to pay a premium price for it.

Direct marketing, also called "shopping with a human face," promises "vine–ripened tomatoes that won't bounce if dropped and are full of the flavor you remember (6)."

Direct marketing can give the farmer a larger share of the food dollar and possibly a higher return on each unit sold, offset to some extent by loss of economies of scale. For some farmers, adding value or marketing some minimally processed farm products directly to the consumer is a way of enhancing financial viability. Farmers who are unable to compete in, or are locked out of, distant markets can build a thriving local business. However, finding the right niche and marketing directly to the public is a hard and labor–intensive job requiring time and effort, creativity, ingenuity, sales expertise, and the ability to deal with people in a pleasant and positive manner. Agricultural producers must be absolutely sure they are ready for the job.

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Importance of Marketing

For too long, farmers have thought of marketing as simply how to dispose of their products. Locked into producing a very small number of major crops and insulated from the market, they have not been required to have a clear understanding of ever–changing consumer wants and needs. Producers have traditionally taken whatever price they could get while wholesale and retail distribution networks undertook the business of marketing.

Marketing does not begin after production, but well before the first seed is planted. For farmers working outside the conventional system, the importance of marketing cannot be over–emphasized. Consumer–focused marketing is the single most important factor that determines the success of an enterprise. Marketing is not just about selling. It requires a clear and astute understanding of what consumers want and the ability to deliver it to them through the most appropriate channels *for a profit*. It includes the planning, pricing, promotion and distribution of products and services for consumers, both present and potential. According to specialty vegetable grower Don Anderson: "Knowing what's happening in the marketplace is the difference between the farmer who makes it and the farmer who doesn't make it" (7).

Enterprise Evaluation

A good marketing strategy begins with making sure the enterprise is right for you and is feasible. This will require a review and evaluation of your present situation, goals, possible enterprises, physical, financial and marketing resources, and market potential. The evaluation should help you answer some key questions, chiefly: Is this really

What are the qualities of a successful marketer?

- Not afraid to take risks
- Takes pride in the product and is not shy about saying so
- Willing to plan, research and experiment
- Flexible

- Independent
- Creative
- Thrifty

From Market What You Grow by Ralph J. Hills, Jr.

what you want to do? Is there a market for the product? Do you have the necessary skills to do it? Are you going to develop the market? Or will you raise a crop for which there is a pre–existing market? Will it be profitable? Can you expand in the foreseeable future? A sample feasibility study for an agricultural enterprise may be found on the University of Georgia Extension website at: http://www.ces.uga.edu/pubcd/b1066-w.html (9).

- Start by listing your business and personal goals. Prioritize them.
- Is this going to be a full–time enterprise?
- Is your family involved and supportive?
- Inventory physical resources like land, soil, machinery, water, buildings, livestock etc. Define constraints.
- Is family and/or off–farm labor available?
- Is your spouse involved in the planning? A spouse's knowledge of medicinal herbs or cooking could spin off into an additional on–farm enterprise.
- Do you have access to financial resources in the form of savings, credit or investment by family or friends?
- What are some of the crops that will grow well in your area and will fetch the price you need?
- What are the marketing resources in your region? Check out the farmers' markets and the retail stores. Is a roadside stand feasible? Talk to others who have one. Are there restaurants, grocery stores and supermarkets willing to buy locally raised produce or meat?
- Who are your potential customers? Would they like to buy direct–marketed products or do they prefer buying at mass retail outlets where price is the main consideration? Is there scope in your business plan for consumer education? Have you considered the potential for entertainment farming and tourism?
- What information and resources do you need to help you along the way? How can you best access such resources?

Market research

Following this preliminary survey, begin to identify and define your product. Get all the information you can about sources, marketing, production, processing, packaging and sales. This will require a good bit of systematic research. Check the libraries in your area. Read all the USDA and Extension publications you can lay your hands on as well as trade journals and periodicals, books on market gardening and seed catalogs.

Talk to your Extension agent, visit the local stores (gourmet and otherwise) and supermarkets to see what is selling, and why one product appears more appealing than another. Talk to customers, local stores, food clubs, specialty distributors, ethnic stores, restaurants and other prospective outlets in your region. What do they want? Is there an unfilled niche? With your production, labor and marketing resources, will you be able to fill this niche?

Find out what your prospective competitors are doing. Look for ways to improve upon what they are offering. Useful exercises for defining the competition and customer base can be found in Geraldine Larkin's book *12 Simple Steps to a Winning Market Plan* (see Resources). For use in researching the market for new farm–based enterprises, Judy Green of Cornell University has compiled a list of agricultural alternatives. (see the ATTRA Publication on ***Evaluating a Rural Enterprise***.) Information on doing your own market research is also available from ATTRA.

Why market research?

Information from market research helps to formulate a market strategy and project profitability. Two levels of information may be obtained:
General:
Food shopping habits;
What are some trends in lifestyles? convenience? Emphasis on family time and homecooked meals?
What is the ethnic and racial make–up of population, what are its food preferences?
What are the trends in food safety, health and nutrition?
What are the marketing trends? Growth in organics? An emphasis on freshness?
Specific:
Who are the buyers? What are their ages, incomes and lifestyles?
What are their wants?
Size of the market, number of buyers;
Number of competitors; are they successful? What are their weaknesses?
What price can you expect?
How much of the market can you expect to hold?
What are packaging and labeling requirements?
What are the barriers to market penetration for the products you have in mind?

You can either start small and grow bit by bit, or you can start in a big way from the very beginning. Either way, you must be prepared to do your homework and get to know your markets to be successful. One way to identify potential markets that exist in your area is by using the "30–mile market technique" (12). Most customers of direct marketers are believed to live within 30 miles of the point of sale. Market research within this radius will unearth useful information about production possibilities and the presence of competitors. Detailed market analysis and research is imperative before you promote and sell your product. Not only does it reduce business risk by providing credible information, it can help identify problems in the market as well as little–known opportunities for profit. By knowing the size and makeup of your market, its geographic location, demographic and behavioral characteristics, it will be easier to create the appropriate marketing strategy and you will avoid wasting time and money marketing to the wrong people.

Marketing plan

Marketing is an essential element of a small agricultural enterprise. The marketing environment will ultimately exert a strong influence on the nature of the business. The crop grown will be determined less by the farmer's personal tastes than by what the market will absorb at a price the farmer is willing to take. A good market plan broadly aims to define the consumer, the products or services they want, and the most effective promotion and advertising strategies for reaching those consumers (13). It clarifies objectives, appropriate actions, projected income, pricing structures, costs and potential profitability. A step–by–step business planning tutorial for a direct marketing enterprise is available at http://fbimnet.ca/bc/.

Domestic food demand - some trends to keep an eye on:

Demography: There will be fewer new U.S. households formed through the year 2010. There will be a greater proportion of single–person households as well as families without children. Households with two adults and one child will fall from 25% of the total to 20% over the next 15 years. The Packer's annual Fresh Trends survey found that one–person households already account for 25% of buyers. This information implies larger demand for single–serve products and produce, and higher per capita food spending in one and two–person households.

Health and nutrition (10):

1. Products perceived to be fresh will have the strongest competitive advantage. According to a survey reported in The Packer's 1997 supplement "Fresh Trends," 17% of the respondents had purchased one or more new fresh vegetables every year.
2. Shoppers are looking for taste and may be less willing to compromise this for health. So, if a product is both healthy and tasty, it is guaranteed to be a winner.
3. Since 1990, the claims "natural" and "grown without pesticides" are the only two labels that have grown in importance relative to others.
4. Aging baby boomers will push new product positionings and define the market for health foods.
5. More and more consumers will recognize the connection between nutrition and health.

Safety (11):
The buzzword in 1999 is "local." "Country of Origin" labelling was overwhelmingly (85%) favored by produce consumers participating in the Packer Survey. In fact, 63% favored mandatory labelling. This can only work to the advantage of local producers.

A market plan alone does not guarantee success, but it does indicate that many of the factors that affect the profitability and continued survival of the operation have been given consideration. A market plan is usually part of a larger business plan that includes production, financial, staffing and management plans. The process of writing a business plan is not within the scope of this paper but listed at the end of this section are resources to help you find more information on the subject.

A good place to start is the Small Business Administration, a federal agency that operates small business institutes and development centers, SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) and publishes business publications. Each state has an SBA office that may be approached for help with developing a marketing or business plan.

Elements of a marketing plan are (14):

- Marketing situation—a summary of your present situation, what you are currently selling and how, who your customers are, what their needs are, your competition, your own strengths and weaknesses, how you are promoting your product, what the current food and marketing trends are, etc.
- Marketing objectives—a summary of your short and long term goals, product diversification, additional market segments (alternative outlets) to tap. Objectives should be realistic and measurable—e.g., you would like to increase sales by 10% within the next year.
- Marketing strategies—ways to achieve your goals, what you will produce, how you will promote and advertise the new product, the channels of sale, how you plan to beat your competition.
- Budgets—include estimated costs and return based on sales, and strategies for monitoring and curtailing costs.
- Action plan—immediate steps (e.g., look in the yellow pages for graphic artists to design logo, shortlist names of newspapers for a press release, assign person to deliver products to market, etc.)
- Evaluation—a summary of progress on marketing objectives. The frequency of evaluation depends on the plan and could be each month, every six months or annually.

Objectives and strategies are a dynamic part of the planning process and change depending on the market situation and competition.

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Niche Marketing

Anyone can pick a bunch of vegetables or fruits, set up a stand at the local farmer's market *et voila*! a direct marketer is born. However, what is it that differentiates a successful marketer from the rest of the pack? James McConnon, Business and Economics Specialist at the University of Maine Coop Extension says that in order to survive in a world of mass retailers, it is absolutely imperative to find and fill a niche that is not filled by the mass retailer (Wal–Mart, Safeway) (15). In addition, he lists three other survival strategies: good promotion, good service, and good customer relations.

The following section focuses on creative marketing tips, including specialty and value–added marketing, using examples of farmers who have built a successful direct marketing business.

What is a niche market?

A target group whose market responses are similar to each other, but different from other groups.

What makes a niche market worthwhile for the farmer?

- There must be accessible information about the group.
- The group must be reachable through clearly identified information channels.
- The group must be big enough and sufficiently profitable to make it worth targeting.
- The nature of a niche market is that it tends to disappear after awhile. Frieda Caplan, whose company introduced the kiwi to America, stopped selling kiwis in 1990 because over supply and falling prices had eliminated the niche.

Blemishes Only Skin Deep, says Orchardist

ATTRA specialist Guy Ames of Ames Orchard and Nursery markets his low–spray apples as ecologically raised. Ames, committed to growing healthy food for the community, is forced to spray for the plum curculio, an insect he is unable to control entirely through organic means. He uses Imidan once or twice during the season (unlike conventional growers who rely heavily on more persistent pesticides, spraying up to 12–14 times in the season for a cosmetically perfect product). Part of Ames' marketing strategy is to educate consumers to disregard minor blemishes on fruit and instead appreciate its freshness and wholesome flavor. Buyers can get a taste of the produce at the Fayetteville, AR, farmers' market three times a week in season.

(see Resources for publications on eco–labeling.)

Product differentiation

A very elementary way of differentiating one's product is to take it directly to the consumer. It is relatively easy for a direct marketer to promote a product as farm–fresh and different from the one sold at the mass retail store. Other ways to differentiate your product are by producing it earlier in the season, marketing it as low–spray (see box above) or organic or naturally–raised, and by adding value to it in some other way. Cut flowers arranged into bouquets, garlic turned into decorative braids or wreaths, prewashed and bagged vegetables, bunched fresh herbs—these are a few simple ways to add value to products.

Consumer concerns with pesticides in food, freshness, nutrition, and flavor have turned the organic food movement into a multi–million dollar industry. The changing racial and ethnic mix of the population signals an increase in the demand for exotic and unusual vegetables and meats. Not least exciting of all is that people are rediscovering the pleasure of fresh ingredients from local farms—a more meaningful connection to the land (16).

The one advantage that direct marketers have over retailers is the ability to build their relationships with customers over time. Indeed, good marketing is *about* building trust and personal loyalty in the relationship. Good sellers know and use the customer's name. Consumers who feel an emotional bond to the grower are likely to remain loyal, even though the product is available at the grocery store at a cheaper price.

Marketing gimmicks will not hold customers unless accompanied by an excellent product and superior service. Conventional marketing wisdom has it that 80% of sales come from 20% of customer base. The grower must build a core customer base and let them know how important they are. Word–of–mouth advertising is the most effective and inexpensive way to attract new customers (17). Stay on top of consumer trends. The best–made product in the world will not sell if it isn't something people want.

Education of the consumer plays a big part in salesmanship. Most people, for instance, are oblivious to the environmental and health benefits of livestock raised on forage.

Conveying information about the farm, how the product is raised and why it is raised the way it is, the effect of recent weather on the crops, and other farm–centered conversation is important. Not only is this good for business, it also is a small step toward the development of consumer awareness of the farm and of social and health issues. Once customers know that you are providing healthy food, they gladly take on the responsibility to support local farmers. Help them help you run your business successfully and profitably.

Some resources you can use to educate the consumer about the benefits of fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat are:

Nutrition Action Health Letter
Center For Science in the Public Interest
Suite 300, 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington DC 20009-5728
202-332-9110
e-mail: cspi@cspinet.org
http://www.cspinet.org

Produce For Better Health Foundation
1500 Casho Mill Road
Newark, DE 19711
302-738-7100
http://www.dole5aday.com
PBHF has been licensed by the National Cancer Institute to promote the 5–a–day Program developed by NCI. PBHF is sponsored by the produce industry.

Mothers and Others
40 West 20 Street
New York, NY 10011-4211
e-mail: Mothers @mothers.org
http://www.mothers.org
West Coast Office: e–mail:
WestCoast@mothers.org
(Publishes *The Green Guide*. Its primary project aim is to build demand for a better quality food system, to open the marketplace to make it more responsive to consumer needs, and to create market opportunities for regional, sustainably produced food.)

Write up your farm or company's mission statement and display it to your customers and employees. Let them know why you are in business and the direction you'd like to go. A simple mission statement may read like this: "Helping people stay healthy with fresh, locally grown food!"

Keep up with trends. Flexibility allows you to adapt your product mix to market fashion and trend. Remember, by the time you read that "crop X" is THE hot thing this year, it's probably already too late to cash in on it. You have to be the first to capture, or better yet, create the next hot thing. Visit specialty stores and restaurants—even if you aren't interested in selling to them—to find out what food items professionals see as the trends to watch. Food fashions get started by upscale restaurants and trickle down to the consumer gradually. Read what your target customers are reading. Food and food trade magazines and women's magazines, in particular, offer great information. Another source is medical research on the health benefits of various foods, as reported in the popular press (also an excellent source of promotional information in today's health–conscious society).

An 'eggsample' of creative marketing

According to Jeff Ishee, a farmer with many years of marketing experience under his belt, if only people knew how commercial layers are managed, they would be flocking to the local market to buy free–range or humanely produced eggs. Laid by hens that are allowed to roam free and have access to fresh air and a rich and varied diet, these eggs have a rich yellow yolk compared to the pale watery insides of factory–produced eggs, and a freshness and good taste that only old–timers recall from their childhood.

To take advantage of the market potential for farm–fresh eggs, talk to buyers about the differences between eggs raised naturally and those sold at the store. Explain why your product is nutritionally superior (a little research helps—see box above), present your point of view pictorially, display photographs of your hens and let the consumers connect. The education helps not just to aid in consumer awareness, but is also a great sales booster. People who feel responsible for their health and recognize instinctively the value of your product will be back for more. And they won't mind paying more for your eggs!

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Specialty Crops and Diversification

Because an enterprise has a better probability of survival if it has a range of products to sell, diversification (especially into a mix of specialty or high–value crops) will benefit many producers. Specialty crops are generally not produced and sold in mass quantities. They have a high cash value per acre, grossing between $4000–$20,000 per acre. They are not necessarily exotic and include crops that need a lot of care to raise (and are therefore outside the traditional wholesale loop). They may be crops with special attributes like vine–ripened tomatoes or lean meat, or those raised especially for ethnic markets (7).

David and Lisa Reeves
Waterfall Hollow Farm, MO

Niche marketing with grass–fed beef (18)

- The two defining characteristics that differentiate the Reeves from other beef cattle farmers are their product and market. When they first set out to direct market, they were determined to give the public an opportunity to eat the kind of beef they grew for themselves. Convinced that there was a niche market for clean, range–grown beef, they proceeded to sell a product that was free of unwanted chemicals, growth hormones, and antibiotics.

The Reeves maintain that conventional wisdom does not apply in the marketing of grass–fed beef. Beef raised entirely on grass has the leanness of wild game and the flavor of sweet beef. It is not heavily marbled as is grain–fed beef. The cattle are butchered between the ages of 18-20 months—the younger the steer, the more delicate and tender the meat. Not

much fat needs to be trimmed off the carcass and the beef is sold with cooking instructions and recipes.

It took some time and some "crushingly expensive mistakes" for the Reeves to learn how to tap into their niche market. Glossy advertising in the local tourist guides (*Bon Appetit, Eureka Springs Dining Guide, Guide to Local Businesses*), press releases and bulk mailings brought few or no sales. The poor response convinced them that they were better off addressing themselves exclusively to the small percentage of meat–eaters who frequent health food stores or similar establishments and who would buy organic meat. On the down side, of course,was the fact that many health food stores themselves steer clear of red meat because of perceived health risks. Their mission is now to:

> Convince them that there are people out there who will joyfully eat clean, "range"–grown beef, precisely because of the health benefits. We show them photos, and describe the ranch and the lives of our cattle. We point out the obvious that beef is a very high–quality, nutrient–dense source of protein and obscure nutrients like B12, folic acid and zinc, that it is utterly delicious and deeply satisfying.

Today, their main wholesale outlet is the Ozark Cooperative Warehouse in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The warehouse itself markets only their ground beef but trucks orders to buying clubs—groups of private individuals in 11 states—and allows the Reeves to ship on their truck. This is an enormous bit of luck because it allows them to ship their product out of state for very little expense. The other, and more costly alternative, would be to use delivery services like UPS and Federal Express, which do not have freezer trucks and require insulated packaging.

Lisa notes that they really ought to invest more time and effort into in–store presentations and demonstrations. They've refrained from this partly because they do not wish to offend vegetarians present in the store and partly because they are still uncomfortable playing the role of salespeople.

Yet, store managers have found their obvious naiveté and lack of sophistication refreshing, their "hemming and hawing and just talking about their product" different from the spiel of professional sales people. The couple do not make "cold" calls but prefer to write a letter of introduction in advance before paying a visit to the store.

Their ideal marketing strategy would entail getting to know all the mainstream grocery stores with alternative clientele, and health food stores within a three–hour driving radius, contact them on a regular basis—perhaps weekly, bi–weekly or monthly—and keep the stores regularly stocked with their product. So far, they have been able to sell everything they produce without actively marketing. Recently, they have been in contact with ranchers in Missouri and Arkansas who share their philosophy. The Reeves hope to buy some of their cattle or contract with them to grow beef animals, and expand the marketing end of their business soon.

Joan and Richard Wrench, Helena, MT

Montana–based growers Joan and Richard Wrench have been raising garlic as a specialty crop since 1971. They currently give about 8 seminars a year at universities and through USDA, available at reasonable cost, to teach other farmers how to create a plan for farm

independence through raising specialty crops. They are willing to help individual growers or groups wanting to establish a specialty crop enterprise with developing a market and business plan. They may be reached at 406-752-3127 between 8-9:30 am MST.

James and Alma Weaver, Kutztown, PA

The Weavers grew tobacco and cattle on their 80–acre farm for several years before making the switch to specialty farming. The change has permitted them to survive in agriculture when other less flexible operators have been forced to bail out. The Weavers raise approximately 100 different kinds of herbs, a range of flowers, several varieties of ornamental colored corn, more than 100 varieties of peppers, 54 varieties of heirloom tomatoes, 30 different vegetables including some odd–sounding heirloom varieties like Cherokee Trail of Tears beans, Speckled Mennonite lettuce, and Amish Moon and Stars watermelons (19).

Steve Salt, Kirksville, MO

Steve Salt (20), a Missouri–based farmer who raises 600 kinds of vegetables, fruits, and herbs for sale at farmer's markets, restaurants, and via household subscriptions, has a book coming out in November 1999 on specialty ethnic produce. Salt says that Asians, Middle–Easterners, Mediterranean Europeans, and Latin Americans, all of whom have a higher per capita consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables than Americans of northwest European heritage, also have a strong tradition of buying their produce unpackaged, at open air markets where they can examine or taste it before purchase. Supermarkets have been unable to cater to the needs of these people, and Salt writes that raising produce for ethnic markets offers a promising specialty niche where the small grower can compete profitably with the big growers. In addition to direct retail sales, he recommends small–scale (wholesale) marketing to ethnic restaurants and grocery stores (21).

A wide variety of Asian vegetables, once a stronghold of the ethnic market, more and more cross over into the mainstream produce section. Primary markets are ethnic stores, grocery store chains and restaurants. Market data is hard to obtain partly because the truck farmers who raise crops for ethnic markets have generally operated outside conventional channels. Some information on prices and availability may be obtained from *The Packer* and *Produce Business* (see Resources).

Frieda Caplan, an authority on specialty produce (see her home page at http://friedas.com/about.cfm) says that consumer education is extremely important when marketing specialties to the general public. This is no less true of Asian vegetables, the popularity of which has been fueled by ethnic restaurants and educational campaigns by retailers to demystify the preparation of Asian foods through user–friendly packaging and recipes. For a brief summary on market potential, refer to the publication *The U.S. Market For Miscellaneous Oriental Vegetables* by Mihir Desai (listed in the Resources section).

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Value–added Marketing

Value–added is a relatively new term in direct marketing jargon. Simply put, it means processing or modifying the product through "cooking, combining, churning, culturing, grinding, hulling, extracting, drying, smoking, handcrafting, spinning, weaving, labeling,

and packaging" (22). Other ways to add value to an agricultural product include:

- growing something in a way that is acknowledged as safer, or
- adding a component of information, education or entertainment

The customer is spared the additional work and the producer charges extra for adding value. Take garlic, for example. Sold in bulk it brings $4/lb. When braided, it may bring up to $7/lb as a decorative item. Adding value holds the promise of additional income especially in the off season, but it is certainly more labor–intensive and requires more management, more investment in equipment, and an awareness of legal and regulatory issues pertaining to on–farm processing. Value–added products do not have the same economies of scale as mass–produced goods, and their success hinges heavily on the producer's retail strategy, especially advertising and promotion.

An alternative agricultural specialty currently attracting a great deal of attention is agritourism. Although not every family is willing or able to entertain the public, for those who enjoy meeting new people or hosting groups, a farm entertainment enterprise is a good opportunity for selling on–farm processed items.

On–farm processors must be aware of regulations governing their enterprise. If a food product is being produced, usually a commercial kitchen is required. Specific regulations vary by state. A good overview may be found in a recent book by Neil Hamilton (see Resources section). Many farmers find it easier to lease space in an approved food processing facility, rather than spend the $100,000 or more required to build and maintain a commercial kitchen on–farm. You should be aware that most states prohibit small children from entering a commercial kitchen, or anyone who is ill, or domestic meal preparation taking place there. A separate packaging facility may be needed. There are specific labeling requirements to be met, and additional regulations may apply in the case of interstate sales. Your state agriculture department and county health department are good places to start gathering information.

ATTRA's Value-added and Processing Series

Overview: Adding Value to Farm Products
Small-Scale Food Dehydration
Grain Processing
Small-Scale Oilseed Processing
Soyfoods

An organization that can provide information on developing food products is the Institute of Food Technologists (see Resources). In some places, governments, university centers or non–profit organizations (examples that come to mind are Minnesota's Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, the University of Nebraska's Food Processing Center, Iowa's Wallace Technology Transfer Foundation) assist rural micro–enterprise or other home–based food processing businesses in getting started. University food technology departments may be able to provide handbooks and guides for value–added food processing, technical assistance, and funding opportunities, as well as information on rules, responsibilities and marketing options.

Food processing incubators (FPI) have been a popular rural development strategy. FPIs, for a fee, provide commercial kitchen space and processing equipment, as well as technical assistance with product formulation and packaging. Some include peer group counseling to talk over manufacturing or marketing issues.

Little is known yet about the economic impact of FPIs, as they are

Arcata Economic Development Corporation

In Humboldt County, California, the Arcata Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) constructed the Foodworks Culinary Center to help develop micro industry in the region (23). The Center served as an incubator for 12 local gourmet and specialty food companies and includes 1000 sq. feet of shared commercial kitchen space in addition to each company's personal kitchen, 4000 sq. feet of warehouse space, and central office services.

Products being made by the companies include baklava, pastas, Finnish coffee bread, smoked salmon and garlic cream cheese spread, tofu products, ice–cream and toppings, jams, flavored honey and chocolate confections. Tenants have formed a marketing cooperative and a mail order catalog featuring the products was made available to promote them all across the country. For more information, call (707) 822-4616.

a relatively new concept. Duncan Hilchey at Cornell's Farming Alternatives Program (see list of Organizations under Resources) has conducted case studies of four incubators to get a better understanding of their working and impact. His findings are due to be published early in 2000. Advance copies may be requested. Meanwhile, those interested in exploring this subject further should get a copy of the publication called *Establishing a Share–Use Commercial Kitchen* from:

Bob Horn
Next Level Training Network
University of Colorado at Denver
Campus Box 128, PO Box 173364
Denver, CO 80217-3364
800-873-9378 (cost is $58 plus $4 s&h)
(303) 556-6651 FAX

Elizabeth Ryan, who sells a wide variety of value–added products—such as cider, fruit sauces, chutneys and salsa—at farmer's markets in and around New York City says that one way to make on–farm processed goods more profitable is to give farmers access to a commercial processing plant on a time–share basis. This kind of support has traditionally been unavailable to value–added enterprises.

Small farmers with specialty meat products have had particular difficulty finding and gaining access to USDA–certified processing plants. Arkansas–based graziers Lisa and David Reeves searched for three years to locate a good USDA–inspected facility to process their direct–marketed beef. Large processors, although certified by the USDA, will not differentiate between the small farmer's product and the large volume of meat they process and so are not a real option. (In other words, the farmer cannot retain ownership of the product.) USDA certification is mandatory for interstate sales and in states that lack an inspection program (24).

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Pricing and Profitability

If you don't have a percentage of people walking away from you at market, you're selling too cheap, says Tim Kornder, a farmer from Belle Plaine, Minnesota. Setting a price is one of the more challenging tasks faced by the direct marketer. How does one know how much

a pound of tomatoes or a head of lettuce is worth? On what information are these pricing decisions based?

In general, prices are set by production and marketing costs at the lower end, while the upper limit is set by what your customers are willing to pay, how much competition you have, and your own desired profits. It pays to figure your costs and set your prices accordingly, rather than just going by what others are charging; steady, consistent prices encourage steady, consistent customers.

Knowing your costs of production, both fixed and variable, is the first step in pricing strategy. Keeping good records for each item that you produce allows you to assess the profitability of each item in your product mix. Variable costs refer to costs directly associated with that item. These include costs such as field preparation and seed that will be there, even if nothing is harvested, as well as expenses directly related to yield such as harvest and packaging costs.

Fixed costs, or overhead, include costs such as loan repayments, property taxes, insurance, and depreciation and maintenance on buildings and equipment, which will be there even if nothing is grown. In addition, it is important to include some kind of wage or salary for yourself in your fixed costs. Don't forget marketing costs. It's usually easiest to include these in overhead. For the small producer, the biggest marketing cost is probably his or her time spent in finding and serving customers, doing promotions, making deliveries, and so on. Other costs could include advertising, free samples, and fuel and vehicle upkeep. These fixed costs are allocated to each item you produce, perhaps by the precent of total acreage or total production that each item accounts for. So if 10% of your land were in corn, then 10% of your total overhead would be included in the costs to produce that corn, for example.

Break-even analysis

The break–even point refers to the price and quantity sold that will just cover all costs, leaving zero profit. At this price and sales level, while no profits are made, you won't be losing money. The break–even point is calculated as follows:

Understanding this concept allows you to experiment with different combinations of prices and quantities, as well as different levels of variable and fixed costs, to assess potential profitability of various items. If you can't sell a product for more than cost, you had better not grow it in the first place. The new grower can start the educational process by studying wholesale prices and comparing those with retail rates at the store.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service publishes daily wholesale prices for produce, which may be accessed at http://www.ams.gov/marketnews.htm. Some growers call wholesalers for current prices; others

Sales Price x Quantity Sold
= Revenues
- Variable Costs per unit x Quantity Sold
= Contribution Margin

("contribution that the item makes to covering fixed costs. This concept is useful because it is often very difficult to decide what part of fixed costs can be assigned to a particular item. Rather than trying to figure out that your rutabaga crop accounts for 5% of the cost of your tractor, you can figure out which items contribute the most and plan

check in with local chefs and local retail stores, especially on comparable specialty items. Wholesalers usually market up by 50%, while retailers mark up by as much as 100%. This kind of information is useful in setting a realistic price for direct–marketed products. Keep in mind, however, that stores sell "loss leaders," items that are not marked up, which serve to draw in buyers.

your product mix accordingly).

- Fixed Costs
= Zero, or you can substitute a desired profit margin, such as 5% of sales.

How much would you have to sell to break even at these prices? What about at farmers' market prices? Or you can start by estimating how much of each item you think you can sell, and then figuring what price you would need to break even. Is that price reasonable for the markets you plan to access? If the price is too high, how much would you have to reduce your costs or increase your sales in order to break even at a more reasonable price? If it appears that the break–even requirement is met, then you can begin figuring how high your prices can go. Again, base your estimates on research. For example, you could talk to growers at markets you won't be attending, so that they won't be giving information to a competitor. How much of each item do they sell over the season?

Cost–plus pricing is an easily used option. Once variable costs are figured per unit of the item produced, you just add a percentage of unit cost to the cost to get the price. That percentage should be enough to cover fixed costs and your desired profits. A 40% markup is about average for a direct marketer, although perishable items and items with higher storage costs are marked up higher (7). For more information and assistance with pricing, Extension and your local small business development center should be able to help.

Beginning lessons in pricing strategies are often best learned at farmers' markets. Direct marketer Andy Lee says that he usually takes a quick walk around just before the market starts to note other displays and prices. Being the only organic grower at many of the markets he sells in, he marks his prices about 10% higher, especially if he sees that his products seem as good as or better than the others. Lee's high prices may discourage some buyers but usually, he says, customers don't complain once they taste the "delicious homegrown goodies" (17).

In one survey of 3000 customers, people were asked to rate the eight most important factors in their decision to buy sweet corn. Price ranked fifth behind freshness and other quality considerations (25). Less than 15% of the sample thought price was a significant factor in purchasing corn. Roadstand growers who experimented with two piles of corn, one priced at $3.50 and the other at $3.00, found that the more expensively corn sold out faster than the cheaper corn. The reason may be that people assumed the higher–priced corn was fresher (25). The above experiment may have turned out the way it did because of the factors unique to corn, but it suggests that price may not be the only consideration for a prospective buyer.

Growers emphasize the importance of setting a price at the beginning of the season and holding on to it. Customary pricing, as it is called, compels the buyer to disregard price and base their purchase on other considerations. Laurie

Todd, a small–scale grower based in New York, says that people will pay top dollar only if quality and service are guaranteed (26). To attract

MarkBrown, Massachusetts

consumers, he suggests giving samples so that people can taste the product, using attractive displays and packaging, and emphasizing the product's uniqueness. Like other growers, he does not recommend that you lower prices even when your competitors are reducing theirs. Full–time growers complain about hobby growers who don't price realistically and virtually give away their produce for free. Many markets try to educate growers not to undercut the next person.

Clearly marked prices are a must to let customers know exactly how much a grower is charging.

Growers who hold their price all season have the option of multiple–unit pricing to move extra volumes or attract buyers who want to buy in bulk for canning or freezing.

Mark Brown of Brown's Provin Mountain Farm in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts, tries to set retail prices twice as high as wholesale rates and says he likes to remain within "reasonable" range of store prices while making sure his production and sales costs are covered (27). In the event of lower prices, either from a sale or a market glut, Brown prefers to retain his base price and add extra value to his product instead of reducing his price. So, when the competition is selling corn for $2.75/dozen (0.23 cents an ear), Brown maintains his base price of 35 cents an ear and sells 6 ears for $2 with a seventh tossed in for free, or $3.75/dozen with two ears free. Brown finds that more people buy 14 ears for $3.75, and he still makes 4 cents/ear more than his competitors.

Finally, this advice from growers:

- Don't sell your goods for a lower rate at the end of the day;
- Compete fairly on quality and service, never undercut;
- Don't badmouth other growers;
- Raise a good product and ask for a good price.

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Direct Marketing Alternatives

Ordinarily, retail markets command the highest price per pound of product, while wholesale markets move more of the product than retail markets but at lower prices. Farm sales and farmers' markets, You–Pick, mail–order are typically low–volume markets. Restaurants, retail stores, cafeterias, health food stores, and caterers constitute mid–volume markets, where prices are better than wholesale but on the lower end of retail. Smaller farmers may find that selling to low– and mid–volume markets works best for them. Mid–volume markets, especially, offer the advantage of small to medium crop production as well as medium to better prices (28).

Some direct marketing options are outlined here. State departments of agriculture or Cooperative Extension may have published guidebooks outlining the laws and regulations for direct marketing in the state. Check with local authorities before starting.

Organizing and selling at farmers' markets

There has been an explosive growth in the number of farmers' markets around the country. In the mid–seventies, there were fewer than 300 markets in the United States. Two decades

later, there are more than 2,400 farmers' markets, with approximately 1 million people visiting them each week. The Madison, WI, farmers' market is first in the nation to have a website advertising the market. See: http://www.madisonfarmersmarket.com/.

Several states have centralized information on farmers' markets, and a number of state–wide farmers' market associations have been formed. A comprehensive address list of farmers' markets is available on the Internet at http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/FarmMARKET/FMIndex.html. Guides for organizing and selling at farmers' markets are published by the Cooperative Extension Service in some states.

A publications list including direct marketing and other information published by the Hartford Food System may be requested (see Resources). A new publication offers guidance on selling local produce to school systems. Florida A&M University has initiated the "School Lunch Project" to assist small farmers in marketing to institutional food programs. A network of small farmers cooperatively produces and markets selected produce items to institutional buyers.

Many states offer help in promoting locally grown fruits and vegetables, sometimes with a special logo. City government, tourist departments and chambers of commerce can often be enlisted to help promote farmers' markets.

Farmers' markets seem to work best for growers who offer a wide variety of produce of the type desired by customers. Consumers want markets to be easily accessible with good parking facilities. A little related entertainment never seems to hurt—seasonal festivals, street musicians, tastings, demonstrations, etc. Sales help must be pleasant and courteous, willing to answer questions. Farmers interested in this marketing method can find opportunities for creative selling and fresh ideas through participating in the local farmers' market association and direct marketing meetings.

Additional information on farmers' markets is available from ATTRA.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) plans operate in several different ways. One involves a single farmer selling "subscriptions" or "shares" at the beginning of the season and then delivering, on a regular schedule, baskets of whatever is produced. Another method involves consumers who band together to rent land and hire a farmer to raise food for them. A new book, *Sharing the Harvest*, provides case histories, models, and strategies for starting a CSA (see Resources). The CSA of North America (see list of Associations) can provide more information on how CSAs work, including a video, *It's Not Just About Vegetables*, and accompanying handbook.

An e–mail networking list on CSA was started in February 1996 and subscription is free.

> To subscribe, send a message to: listproc@prairienet.org. In the body of the message, type: subscribe csa-l, followed by your first name and your last name.

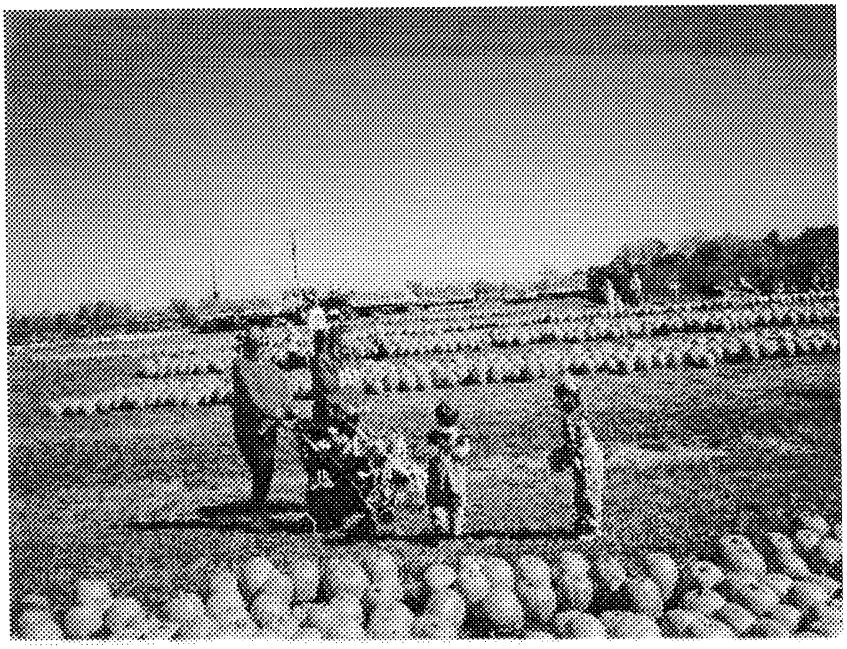
For an overview of Community Supported Agriculture, see ATTRA's publication on ***CSA***'s.

On–farm sales and agri–tourism

On–farm sales include pick–your–own (P–Y–O) and roadside stands or farm markets. Pick–your–own began in response to the 1974 energy crisis, appealing to customers (mainly families) who had the time and the necessary expertise to process their own foods in quantity. More recently, PYO enterprises have been integrated into the growing "farm entertainment" sector. Marketing strategies may include educational tours, an on–farm market with opportunities to buy fresh produce or value–added products, ready–to–eat food, festivals, classes, seasonal events such as a personalized pumpkin patch, or agricultural mazes. A buffalo ranch, besides selling hides and meat, charges admission to view the animals.

The Rombach Farm, Chesterfield, MO

Beginning each July, the Rombach Farm becomes a pumpkin wonderland. From late September on, partner Steve Rombach works 7 days a week. Besides pumpkins, apples, and squash, the farm market sells sweet corn (in season) and other vegetables, handcrafted yard furniture, and yard ornaments. Most of the family's remaining 700 acres (100 acres have been lost to development) remain in soybeans and wheat. The biggest profit, however, is from farm stand sales.



Many of the pumpkins are raised on the farm, rotated with wheat. Rombach is thinking of strip cropping pumpkins with wheat, however (because the wheat is not ready when pumpkins must be planted). He uses one field near the house as a display area after the wheat is harvested. The mid–size 20–lb. pumpkin is his best seller, but bigger ones are popular. Few are bought for pie–making. Those left unsold after Thanksgiving are composted in the woods, where wildlife enjoy them. The bulk market for canning does not exist here.

Besides family labor, Rombach hires a lot of part–time help and depends on good friends to volunteer in creating seasonal displays. These elaborate displays are extremely creative and colorful—employing small buildings, 10–ft. high mounds of pumpkins, and Halloween figures. They attract up to 1000 cars a day at the peak of the season. They are not dismantled until the final two weeks "because so many schools come." Backdrops are corn shocks or castor bean plants. Rombach is now looking into offering hayrides.

Insurance is high. The farm carries 5–6 policies, including an umbrella liability policy. Many repairs, seed orders, fertilizer, etc. are undertaken in the off season.

The Rombach farm has been totally rebuilt since 1993, when Missouri River flooding put it under seven feet of water. Initially, the farm enterprises included Christmas tree sales, and acres of U–pik strawberries. But Rombach says they lost money on the trees and PYO customers "trampled too much." Children would throw the berries around. He now does retail sales only. (A few items offere at the farm market are procured from other farmers.)

Rombach's grandfather started hosting parties in the pavillion in 1928; his parents began the retail sales. Steve Rombach, his brother, and a cousin incorporated in 1993, the year they rebuilt by starting the pumpkin venture. Rombach's father, who is retired, now works for him. Mrs. Rombach works off the farm (29).

Such enterprises work best when farms are within thirty miles of a major population center, preferably on or near a good road. Pick–your–own is most adapted to crops which require stoop labor to harvest. Plans and layout for farm markets are published in the NRAES booklet *Facilities for Roadside Markets*, available from Cornell and in *Bypassing the Middleman*, from Rodale Press (see Resources).

In addition to the expected parking, restrooms, harvesting instructions, creative signage, and playgrounds, adequate liability insurance must, of course, be in place.

Direct marketers can get liability insurance through the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) (30). Comprehensive information on legal issues for all types of direct marketing is available in *The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing* (1999) by Neil Hamilton (see Resources).

In some areas of the country, fee hunting is combined with farming. One Nebraska farmer combines fee hunting with hunting lodge accommodations (and a gift shop) during the slow winter season on his 1500–acre grain farm. A publication of interest is *Agritourism in New York: Opportunities and Challenges in Farm–Based Recreation and Hospitality*, available from Cornell Media Services at Cornell University (607-255-2080) for $13.85. (This publication is currently being reprinted.) For more information, see for ATTRA's publication ***Pick–Your–Own and Agri–Entertainment.***

Selling to restaurants and stores

According to some reports, over 50% of American meals are now eaten away from home. This would appear to be a growing market for direct sales of produce. However, most high–volume meal servers (institutional food service and restaurant chains) require huge volumes, typically procured through centralized purchasing. It is still possible, however, to find an individually operated restaurant buying some foods locally. High quality is a prime requisite for sales to such restaurants. Such specialty crops as herbs, garlic, mushrooms, salad greens, cut flowers, and edible flowers for restaurants may be grown on very small parcels of land. One of the main requirements for selling to an upscale restaurant seems to be developing a good relationship with the chef. In some instances sales by local farmers to local institutions may be arranged. The Hartford Food Project (see list of Organizations) has a publication describing creation of such marketing channels.

ATTRA has some additional information on marketing to restaurants and specialty stores.

Mail order and home delivery

Mail order sales generally involve value–added products or (primarily in Florida and the West Coast) fresh fruits. Value–added products are often decorative, rather than culinary. Home delivery of fresh farm products was much more common in the U.S. fifty years ago than it is today. The sight of a horse–drawn farm wagon loaded with bushels of apples, squash, potatoes, and live chickens making its way slowly through a residential neighborhood while the farmer (or his children) knocked on doors was not unusual. But it is still possible for farmers to meet consumers at the doorstep and deliver quality food. This method is currently most used by dairy and meat producers. Nowadays arrangements are made in advance by telephone and meats are usually frozen. Some CSAs home deliver.

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Marketing on the Internet

Plans for selling groceries on the Internet are taking their place along with other forms of e–commerce. Most such plans ask the consumer to pick up an Internet order at their local supermarket.

High–value, nonperishable, low–weight specialty food products and nutritional supplements have been available from a growing number of websites for some time. Delivery is by conventional package delivery systems; this form of e–commerce may be considered another another form of mail–order.

Harp's Supermarket, Fayetteville, AR, has joined the ValuPage website offering Web Bucks to customers who print out coupons from the web page and purchase certain products. Web Bucks may then be used to buy anything else in the store. This is a premium for customers to visit the website. See http://www.valupage.com. Customers may also sign up for regular e–mailed coupons.

Another way to utilize the WWW is to have a farm or business homepage purely for advertising purposes (perhaps cooperatively packaged). Examples include the Madison, WI, farmers market website mentioned previously and the Virtual Virginia Agricultural Community, at: http://www.vvac.org,which facilitates regional communication. The Minnesota Land Stewardship Project's on–line directory of CSA farms (with e–mail and website contacts) is at http://www.misa.umn.edu/lsphp.html.

According to Jennifer–Claire V. Klotz (USDA/AMS), who spoke at the October 1999 National Small Farms Conference in St. Louis, 92 million potential customers are now on the Internet, one–third of them making purchases. Internet users tend to be older, with above–average educations and higher incomes. Interestingly, Internet users share these characteristics with direct market customers in general.

Farms can do business on the Internet either by maintaining their own individual websites, or participating in a directory listing. Research providers and costs; look at bartering to get a website designed. Look at Internet marketing as an opportunity to attract a new clientele, but first determine whether existing customers are on the Internet. Do they have e–mail? Be aware of certain barriers to Internet buying:

- pricing (include shipping costs)

- potential return hassles
- credit card concerns of customers
- privacy issues
- navigating the site

Do everything possible to show you are honest and reputable. Do not sell or lease e–mail addresses. Have a privacy statement that you won't sell customer information.

Customers like a website that is easy to use, quick to download, and updated frequently. Be cautious about graphics that take a long time to come up on screen. At least give customers the option to bypass graphics.

Look into ways to increase search engine results for your site, so that it appears in the first five or ten that come up. (There is a way to bid on "ebay" to get you into the top 5.)

Klotz advises that existing customers (for example, at your farmers' market) should be approached slowly for information for your database. Remember that "customers are selfish and there is a lot of competition on the Net." Invite people to your website; don't ask for the customer's e–mail addresses right away. Have a prize lottery to get customers' names and addresses for your mailing list. Or have on–line coupons they can print out (10% off, etc.). Then ask for their e–mail address so they can receive your newsletter.

With another individual or business website, offer something if they put in a link. Call the local press (Food or Business section, not Agriculture), and offer an interview.

Put your web address everywhere—on all stationery and items that go out. Offer freebies (samples) when filling orders. Have a raffle. Develop a kids e–mail mailing list and send birthday cards. Send fall holiday greetings. List your competitors' prices (shown to be effective). Bid on words for headings (eBay, etc.) to make the top five results from browsers. Make your website interesting. When creating your web page, call the first page "index" to aid search engines.

Constantly test and evaluate your site.

Some Home Pages for U.S. Farms

Claymont Court, Shepherdstown, WV
http://www.claymont.org

Cromwell Valley CSA
http://www.earthome.org

Earthlands North Quabbin Farm
http://www.tiac.net/users/elandspc/

Eco Farms, Lanham, MD
http://www.ecofarms.com

Glen Oshira, Hawaii
http://www.smallfarms.com

Howell Farm, Titusville, NJ
http://www.americanmaze.com/PR98Howell.htm.

Massachusetts Farm Directory
http://www.massgrown.org
http://www.massgrown.org/youpick.com

Peacework Organic Farm, Newark, NY
http://www.gvocsa.org

Three Sisters Farm, Sandy Lake, PA
http://www.bioshelter.com

Dog Wood Knob Farm, Mt. Vernon, KY
http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/8450/

Mountain Gardens, Burnsville, NC 28714
http://gardens.webjump.com

Tate Family Farm/Goat Lady Dairy
Climax, NC
http://www.goatladydairy.com

Wollam Gardens, Jeffersonton, VA 22724
http://www.wollamgardens.com

Angelic Organics, Caledonia, IL 61011
http://www.AngelicOrganics.com

Elixir Farm, Brixey, MO
http://www.elixirfarm.com

Inn Serendipity, Browntown, WI 53522
http://members.aol.com/innseren/public/innserendipity.html

Susan's Garden, Plattsburg, MO
http://ianwhite.stanford.edu/susansgarden/

Camas Meadow Farm, Noti, OR
http://members.aol.com/camasfarm/

Emandal, Willits, CA
http://emandal.com

Green Gulch Farm, Sausalito, CA
http://www.sfzc.com/Pages/Green_Gulch/Green_Gulch_Controls/gg.html

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Promotion and Publicity

Associations such as the Organic Trade Association (OTA) help promote members through materials and a calendar of events.

Promotions help to increase sales per customer and the number of clients, and enhance the image and visibility of the farm, company and/or product. For an overview of promotion strategies and advertising, refer to *Sell What You Sow!*, *The New Farmers' Markets* and Extension publications such as the Pacific Northwest Cooperative Extension series *Farmer–to–Consumer Marketing* (especially no. 3., *Pricing and Promotional Strategies*) (see Resources). Promotions come in different shapes and sizes but they all have some common characteristics.

- They draw attention and communicate information;
- They provide an incentive or premium to the consumer;
- They invite the consumer to buy.

Word–of–mouth advertising by satisfied customers is priceless and cannot be purchased or engineered except by providing good service and a good product. Because an estimated 80% of business comes from return buyers, the focus is on rewarding loyal customers by offering discounts, gift certificates or a free service.

Coverage by the local newspaper or radio/television station can bring in more sales than any paid advertisement. Events on the farm—a Halloween festival for children, availability of a new and unusual food item, a cider–tasting contest—may lure reporters in search of human–interest or weekend–event stories. Invite the local newspaper's food editor over for a dinner of grass–fed beef, or pastured chicken so she or he can taste the difference from supermarket fare. While writing up a press release, look for the news peg that makes the story—an accomplishment, an award, anything that seems interesting or valuable to the community. Give the press plenty of notice, good photo opportunities, and always return phone calls.

Paid advertising is the non–personal promotion of an idea, product or service directed at a mass audience. Its aim is to generate an increase in sales, induce brand recognition and reinforce the "unique selling point," inform potential customers about the availability of a product, and create demand for that product. An advertisement should emphasize benefits, not objects. What will people get from your product or from a visit to your farm? High–quality, fresh, delicious produce or meat? Family fun? Friendly service? You can either advertise continuously through the season to maintain your presence in the marketplace, or you can advertise just before a product is available.

Advertising budgets generally range between 4 and 10 percent of sales. Let's say you rely heavily on radio spots for continual advertising during the six months you are open (31). If projected sales are $50,000 and you commit 4% to the advertising budget, this means you have $2,000. If 60% of this is allocated to continual advertising through the 6–month marketing season, you have $1,200 for that period. The balance of $800 would be allocated to each of those months depending on the percentage of seasonal sales that occurs in that month. If 50% of sales occur in July, then $400 would be allocated to that month over and above the base budget for April. This amount can be used for other forms of promotion such as direct mailings, or newspaper ads. If competition is high, ad budgets may need to increase. Re–evaluate an ad campaign if it does not bring about a quick increase in sales.

Attractive road signs are another effective form of advertising. Signs that are legible to the speeding motorist are a way to induce people to stop and visit the roadside market or farm–stand. Signs should have a logo and should reflect the kind of goods being sold—more upscale if they are high–priced and a 'no–frills' sign if otherwise. Signs that advertise an unusual or out–of–the ordinary product will draw the curious to the farm. The first sign should be placed a good distance (at least 2500 feet) before the market to give the motorist time to decide whether or not to stop. Keep signs neat and well–maintained.

Direct mail is advertising with a personal touch and requires an up–to–date and extensive mailing list. Postcards with pictures of your farm, a logo and a promotional message may be sent just before a farm festival or when produce is available. Direct mailing is only as effective as its mailing list (i.e. its targeting of people who will buy your product). Mailing lists should be revised each year. Target groups of people likely to buy your product (e.g., members of a health food store or co–op). A mailing list can be developed by asking people to sign up for mailings. Also, ask them where they heard about your product or farm. This information will help you plan future advertising.

Peggy Frederick, Whitney Point, NY

Peggy Frederick of Strawberry Valley Farm in Whitney Point, New York, mails customers a specially–designed card listing the vegetables and strawberries available for U–pick. For Christmas, she sends out the "giftbox" brochure which lists gift items from the farm's bakery and consignment gift shop.

Ellie MacDougall, Maine

In her catalog, Ellie MacDougall, a Maine–based grower, inserts a little promotional mailing on behalf of a local turkey grower, who in turn sells her poultry and turkey stuffing seasonings (32). Many of her seasonings and vinegars are cross–sold by produce growers at other markets and farm stands.

The catalog is marketing tool that serves many purposes. Common elements of a catalog are (33):

- It should tell a story. It should differentiate your business from others and explain why and how you are different.
- It should work like a reference, providing detailed information about the product, service and business.
- It should be a sales tool. In addition to providing information, it must promote your product, service and business.
- It should create a good first impression.

Business cards have a way of sticking around in people's wallets long after they have been distributed. Print and hand out business cards with your name, phone number, farm location and product.

The Internet offers a whole

Papa Geno's Herbs, Lincoln, NE

Within six months of setting up a Web page and beginning an e–mail newsletter, Gene Gage of Papa Geno's Herbs found that plant orders from the Internet had surpassed those from his traditional mail–order catalog (34). Size of the average order through the Internet was higher. Gage sends his e–mail newsletter out 15 times a year. Advertising on e–mail is cheaper, he says. It would cost him 50 cents to send a post card to each customer. Direct mailings to 40,000 people would cost him $20,000. The same people, assuming they had access to a

new world of marketing opportunities. Its key features are 24–hour accessibility by anyone with Internet capabilities and greatly expanded reach without the costs and limitations of direct mail. Customers may be to able to place an order on line, but the chief value is the publicity an attractive website can bring to a producer. Another advantage is making your on–line catalog available to Internet users.

computer, could be reached by e–mail for $5. Each day he receives 100 messages via e–mail. These are in addition to the orders that an employee takes in from her home. The hard work involves spending 20–40 hours a week online, for business and "schmoozing." Gage is constantly on the lookout for links to add to his web page and spends hours giving advice free of charge as resident herb expert of America Online and the gardening site Garden Escape. One disadvantage is that he has had several bad checks from Internet customers, a problem he has never had to face in retail and paper catalog sales.

The first North American Agricultural Internet Marketing Conference "Internet Goes Ag, Making it Work For You!" was held in October 1996, in Chicago. An excellent source of information and current resources is the Washington State University Extension (King County) publication *Internet Marketing for Farmers* (available on–line at http://king.wsu.edu/Ag/ internetmarketing.htm). More information on e–commerce is available from USDA's Small Farm Center (see Resources).

A lively and regular newsletter, written in the first person, discussing upcoming produce, recipes, farm events and life on the farm, makes the reader feel more involved and connected. Ideas for content may come from customers or from employees.

Flickerville Mountain Farm and Groundhog Ranch, Flickerville, PA

Cass Peterson and her late husband, Ward Sinclair, who farmed with great flair and ingenuity for several years, published an annual newsletter for subscribers to their CSA called The Groundhog Report. With just the right touch of wry humor, the publication put together by the former Washington Post reporters informed consumers about prices and included tips on cooking vegetables, news from the farm, and quotable quotes.

When creating a newsletter, consider the following (35):

- What items do you want to promote?
- What should you say to induce readers to buy?
- Are readers made to feel included and important?
- Have necessary details such as farm hours, phone number, deadlines, etc. been included?
- Is the newsletter uncluttered and visually pleasing?

Including a map of how to get to the farm is always helpful. Newsletters may also be sent to the news media or published as an insert in the regional newspapers.

Angelic Organics, Calendonia, IL

Kimberly Rector, formerly of Angelic Organics, a biodynamic farm northwest of Chicago used packaging to promote and educate people about the product (36). An artist by training, Rector chanced upon a motif for the farm, and used it on specially crafted paper labels with the farm logo and information about the product, on packaging for specialty items such as herbs, on signs designed for the farm stand and at the farmers' markets, and on specially–designed point of purchase posters. That increased demand for produce. Rector recommends retail packaging

as a plus for farmers' markets and sales to stores.

Single event promotions like harvest festivals, Easter egg hunts, and Halloween costume contests can be combined with ongoing promotions like school tours or Friday happy hours or open house. Publicize the promotions well ahead to ensure a good turnout.

Lost Nation Orchard and Cider Mill

The Lost Nation Orchard and Cider Mill is a good example of the use of a mix of sales strategies. In addition to creating a striking cider label with a logo to enhance their presence on store shelves, partners Michael Phillips and David Craxton promote Lost Nation as a community farm (37). People trade labor for cider, helping to pick wild apples, label jugs or dig planting holes for new orchards. Phillips and Craxton write occasional press releases promoting apple tastings and harvest festivals, or providing early–season tips to growers. They also run ads regularly in these newspapers. The format generally remains the same, but photographs and text may vary. Advertising budgets average 5% of gross receipts. The idea behind their marketing strategy is to promote the experience of authentic country life, its fun and friendliness and generosity of spirit, in their advertisements, their brochures, at their annual harvest festival, at the school tours hosted on Friday mornings, and on the Lost Nation trading cards – educational cards with a little snippet of information that is handed to the consumer with each purchase. All in all, it makes for a wonderful tourist experience. The ideas, the insight and the creativity behind the marketing package, says Phillips, happened only because they loved and believed in what they were doing.

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Conclusion

Finally, some parting advice to people considering direct marketing or processing of farm products. First of all, do something you love and enjoy doing. Success will follow. Invest time and, if necessary, money in research. Try to have a well–considered plan before proceeding but don't be rigid. Learn as you go. Start small and keep your costs and debt as low as possible. Provide a reliable supply of high quality products and build a good relationship with your customers. Take time to listen to their wants, identify market possibilities, and find a unique market niche for your product. Be adaptable to shifting market opportunities. Ensure diverse markets, so that if one fails, you can fall back on the others. Set a fair price and avoid competing directly with big business, especially on price.
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RR 1, Box 263
Kirksville, MO 63501-9734
e-mail: saltsgvf@istlaplata.net

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Notes taken by Katherine Adam.

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Southampton, MA 01073
(413) 529-0386
(888) 884-9270
http://www.nafdma.com

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Direct Marketing: Resources

Sustainable Farming programs, such as those as Cornell University and the University of California, are often the best sources of recently published guides, as are private initiatives such as the Hartford Food Project. Increasingly, such information is most easily accessed through the Internet. Extension personnel in several states say that all their current publications are listed (and should be accessed) on their websites, as did other organizations.

For out–of–print Extension publications, a U.S. Government Documents repository (generally located at a major landgrant university) or private library may provide access.

Publications which inform small farmers and specialty growers on direct marketing options include *The Business of Herbs*, *Small Farm Today*, *Growing for Market*, and the new electronic publication *Sustainable Farming Connection* at: http://sunsite.unc.edu/farming-connection.

A variety of conferences on marketing and agriculture are held every year around the country. The largest is the national North American Farmers' Direct Marketing conference held at the beginning of each year. The Year 2000 conference will be held on February 10–12 Cincinnati, OH. For information on conferences or proceedings, contact Vicki Parker–Clark at (208) 667-6426. (There is no conference website this year.) Information on the annual Mid–Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference, usually held in mid February, may be obtained from Dr. Ramu Govindasamy at Rutgers Coop Extension at 732-932-9171, ext.

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P.O. Box 428
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River Junction, VT 05001.
800-639-4099

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Walks readers through real life examples of how farmers and others have used e–mail and the Internet to improve their business. Available for $15 ppd from:
UC DANR Communication Services
6701 San Pablo Avenue
Oakland, CA 94608-1239
800-994-8849 or 510-642-2431
Internet address is www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/

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Provides information on the production of many minor or new field crops. Costs $40. Also available is the Alternative Agricultural Opportunities, a bibliography listing over 1600 articles on alternative plants and animals. Cost is $5. Contact:
CAPAP
352 Alderman Hall
1970 Folwell Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108.
612-625-4707; FAX 612-625-4237
http://capap.coafes.umn.edu

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(703) 605-6900.
A copy may be obtained by sending a check or money order for $29.50 to:
ERS-NASS
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield VA 22161
800-999-6779
See publication at: www.econ.ag.gov/
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Auburn CA 95602
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Gibson, Eric. 1994. Sell What You Sow! The Grower's Guide to Successful Produce Marketing. 302 p.

Available for $25.50 from New World Publishing (see above address).

Gregson, Bob and Gregson, Bonnie. 1996. Rebirth of the Small Family Farm. IMF Associates, WA. 65 p.

The book focuses on what to grow and how sell it. Available for $9.95 ($10.65 WA residents) from:
IMF Associates
PO Box 2542
Vashon Island, WA 98070.

Growing For Market (ed.) Marketing Your Produce: Ideas For Small-Scale Farmers

Fairplain Publications
P.O. Box 365
Auburn, KS 66402.

Grubinger, Vernon. 1999. Sustainable Vegetable Production from Start–Up to Market. NRAES. Cornell Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY.

$49.85.

Hakenson, Dan. 1995. The Small Commercial Garden: How to Make $10,000 A Year In Your Backyard. 198 p.

Send $20.90 (ND residents $20.98) to:
PC-Services
PO Box 7294
Bismarck, ND 58507-7294.
800-871-4296.

Hall, Charles R. And Johnson, Jeff L. 1992. A Guide To Successful Direct Marketing. Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. 32 p.

Send $12 by check payable to:
Account 5500 Texas Extension Education Foundation
Attn: Charles Hall
464 Blocker Building
College Station, TX 77843-2124
409-845-1772

Hall, Stephen F. From Kitchen to Market; Selling Your Gourmet Food Specialty. Upstart Publishing.

Available for $24.95 from:
Upstart Publishing
155 N. Wacker,
Chicago, IL 60606.
800-235-8866.

Hamilton, Neil D. 1999. The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing. USDA/SARE grant. 235 p.

Order for $20.00 from:
Agricultural Law Center
Drake University
Des Moines, IA 50311
515-271-2947

Henderson, Elizabeth with Robyn Van En. 1999. Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community Supported Agriculture. Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, VT.

$25.00. Order from:
Chelsea Green Publ.
205 Gates–Briggs Bldg.
P.O. Box 428

White River Junction, VT 05001.
(800) 639-4099
http://www.chelseagreen.com

Ishee, Jeff. 1997. Dynamic Farmers' Marketing. Bittersweet Farmstead, 130 p.

Bittersweet Farmstead
P.O. Box 52
Middlebrook, VA 24459
Describes how family farmers can make the best of the explosive growth in farmers' markets. Copies may be obtained by calling 540-886-8477. Send 14.95 plus $2.50 shipping and handling.

Island Meadow Farm (ed.) Fifty Small Farm Ideas.

Send $3.75 to:
Island Meadow Farm
295 Sharpe Road
Anacortes–Fidalgo Island, Washington, 98221.

Jenkins, R.P. 1991. Establishing and Operating A Farmers' Market: A Manual for Sponsors, Boards of Directors, and Managers of Farmers' Markets. University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service. 24 p.

Order as Pub. 847 from:
Wanda Russell, Co–op Ext.
(423) 974-7360

Jozwik, Francis X. How To Make Money Growing Plants, Trees and Flowers: A Guide to Profitable Earth–Friendly Ventures. Andmar Press. 180 p.

Andmar Press
P.O. Box 217
Mills, WY 82644.
Also by the same author:
Perennials For Profit or Pleasure: How To Grow and Sell in Your Own Backyard. 80 p.

Kamoroff, Bernard. 1992. Small–Time Operator: How to Start Your Own Small Business, Keep Your Books, Pay Your Taxes and Stay Out of Trouble! Bell Springs Publishing, Laytonville, CA 95454. 188 p.

Larkin, Geraldine A. 1992. 12 Simple Steps to a Winning Marketing Plan. Probus Publishing Co., Chicago, IL. 217 p.

Lee, Andy. 1993. Backyard Market Gardening: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Selling What You Grow. Good Earth Publications. 351 p.

Good Earth Publications
P.O. Box 898
Burlington VT 05482
Practical guide on growing food for income. Describes membership gardens, CSA, growing for restaurants, producers' cooperatives, farmers' market etc. To order call 802-425-3201 or e-mail: goodearth@igc.apc.org.

Makus, L.D. et al. 1993. Planning Your Business. CIS 978. University of Idaho, Coop. Extension System. Ord. #422 Available for 50 cents from:

Ag. Publications
Idaho Street
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83844-2240.
208-885-7982.
http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/catalog/catalog.htm*Also available are:*
Makus, L.D., J.F. Guenthner, and J.C. Foltz. 1992. IS942. Pricing Nontraditional Products and Services. Cooperative Extension, University of Idaho. 4 p.

Ord. #386.

Parker–Clark, V.J. 1992. Marketing Your Produce Directly To Consumers. University of Idaho, Coop. Extension System. 6 p.

Ord. # 620.

Parker–Clark, V.J. 1989. Assessing the Potential for Farm and Ranch Recreation. EXT699, Ord. #596.

$1.00.

Smathers, R.L. 1992. Understanding Budgets and the Budgeting Process. CIS 945. University of Idaho Coop. Extension, Moscow, ID. 5 p.

Order. 389. $1.00.

Maue, Patricia et al. 1995. Growing Your Own Specialty Food Business – From Farm to Kitchen to Market. Publication of the NYS Small Business Development Center, Ulster County Community College, Stone Ridge, NY.

MSAWG (compiler). 1996. Direct Marketing Resource Notebook. Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.

Contains over 100 pages of practical information on direct marketing with examples of farmers, contacts for state and federal marketing regulations in the midwestern states, and other resources. Send check for $20 (NE residents add $1 per copy) payable to: Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society An update of this book is being planned for 2000.
PO. Box 736

Hartington, NE 68739
402-254-2289.

Mississippi's Southern Rural Development Center produced the Food Processing Industry—Resource Directory (1997) as a step toward addressing food processing development issues in the southern region.

SRDC #205 is currently out of print, but hard copies, when available, will be $10 from:
SRDC
Box9656
Mississippi State, MS 39762.
601-325-3207

NRAES. No date. Facilities For Roadside Markets. Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service (NRAES) Cornell University Ithaca, NY 14853-5701.

The booklet, NRAES–52, is available for $5.50. Also available from NRAES are:
Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm–Based Enterprises (NRAES–32) for $8 plus $3.50 s&h and Produce Handling For Direct Marketing (NRAES–51) $7 plus s&h. Write to:
NRAES
152 Riley-Robb Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853.
607-255-7654; FAX 607-254-8770

Nebraska Extension (ed.) Setting Up Your Own Business: Financing Your Business (NebFact 96–278).

Note: Only available from NE county extension offices. See www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs.

Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society. No date. The Direct Market Resource Notebook. Hartington, NE 68739.

To order, send $20 to:
NSAS, P.O.
Box 736,
Hartington, NE 68739.
402-254-2289.

O'Neill, Kelly. 1997. Emerging Markets for Family Farms. Center for Rural Affairs, Walthill, Nebraska. 62 p.

Available for $7 from:
CRA
PO Box 406
Walthill, NE 68067-0406.

402-846-5428.

Pacific Northwest Coop. Extension (ed.) 1980. Farmer–to–Consumer Marketing: An Overview. Published by Washington State University Coop Extension, Oregon State University Coop. Extension, University of Idaho Coop. Extension and the USDA.

Also available are:

1. Farmer–to–Consumer Marketing: An Overview
2. Farmer–to–Consumer Marketing: Production and Marketing Costs
3. Farmer–to–Consumer Marketing: Merchandising, Pricing and Promotional Strategies
4. Farmer–to–Consumer Marketing: Place of Business and Product Quality
5. Farmer–to–Consumer Marketing: Personnel Management
6. Farmer–to–Consumer Marketing: Financial Management

Order on–line at:
http://caheinfo.wsa.edu/pub_home-page/pub.html

Packer, The (ed.) [Yearly]. The Packer's Produce Availability and Merchandising Guide. The Packer, Lenexa, Kansas.

Information about display and promotion, post–harvest handling of major vegetable and fruit crops.
Also publishes Fresh Trends annually.
Contact:
The Packer 2000 Guide
Circulation Department
10901 West 84th Terrace
Suite 20, Lenexa, KS 66214.
800-255-5116.
Visit: http://www.thepacker.com. *The 2000 guide will be available in June.*

Richards, Keith and Wechsler, Deborah S. 1996. Making It On The Farm. Increasing Sustainability Through Value–Added Processing and Marketing. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.

For copies, send check for $12 payable to SSAWG Publications
PO Box 324
Elkins, AR 72727

Rocky Mountain Institute (ed.) 1987. "Marketing," How To Survive As A Small Farmer. Rocky Mountain Institute. 40 p.

Rocky Mountain Institute
1739 Snowmass Creek Road,
Snowmass, CO 81654

Salatin, Joel. 1995. Salad Bar Beef. Polyface, Inc., Swoope, VA. 368 p.

Salatin, Joel. 1993. Pastured Poultry Profits. Polyface, Inc., Swoope, VA. 330 p.

Salt, Steve. 1999. Specialty Ethnic Produce.

Order from:
Steve Salt
Green Valley Farm
Kirksville, MO
E–mail: saltsgvf@istlaplata.net.

Schermerhorn, R. W. 1991. Is Your Agribusiness Project Feasible? University of GA Cooperative Extension, Athens, GA. 15 p.

At: http://www.ces.uga.edu/pubed/b1066-2.html.

Schmidt and Acock. Marketing Fruits and Vegetables. #570. Mississippi State Extension, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Smith, Lauren K. and Cathy Roth (ed.) 1993. To Market! To Market!: Promotional Ideas That Will Bring Customers to Your Farmers' Market. AG–MARK. Cooperative Extension, University of Massachusetts, Pittsfield, MA. 20 p.

To order a copy of this booklet, send $1.50 to:
US Extension Bookstore
Draper Hall, B32010
Amherst, MA 01003-2010
413-448-8285. (no phone orders)

Sullivan, G.H. et al. 1981. Direct Farm to Consumer Marketing: A Profitable Alternative for Family Farm Operations. #HO-160. Purdue University Extension Service, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education. 1999. Farming for Profit, Stewardship & Community. Tipsheet #2: Add Value Through Marketing. http://www.sare.org/san/tipsheet/tip2.htm. *3 p.*

University of California (ed.) 1999. Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook. Publication #3346. Division of Ag. and Natural Resources, Oakland, CA.

Available from the Small Farm Center for $30 (see list of Organizations for address).

University of California (ed.) No date. Growing Across the Seasons: A Season and Harvest Extension Guide for the Small–Acreage Farmer. UC Extension.

Available for $13.73 ppd from:
UC Coop Extension
11477 E. Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603
Should I Sell at the Farmer's Market available from UC Davis Coop Extension, Davis, CA 95616

University of Delaware (ed.) No date. Guide to Planning the Farm Retail Market. University of Delaware Cooperative Extension. 85 p.

Available from:
University of Delaware
College of Agricultural Sciences
Ag. Experimental Station Cooperative Extension Newark, DE 19717-1303

University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign College of Agriculture (ed.) 1990. A Grower's Guide to Marketing Fruits, Vegetables and Herbs in Illinois.

Available from:
Cooperative Extension Publications
69 Mumford Hall
1301 West Gregory Drive
Urbana, IL 61801

University of Wisconsin (ed.) No date. Direct Marketing of Farm Produce and Home Goods. Coop Extension.

Available from:
Extension Publications
630 W. Mifflin St. Room 170
Madison, WI 53703-2636
608-262-3346

Wallin, Craig. 1989. Backyard Cash Crops: The Sourcebook for Growing and Selling Over 200 High–Value Specialty Crops, Homestead Design, Inc., Friday Harbor, WA. 231 p.

Whatley, Booker T. 1987. How To Make $100,000 Farming 25 Acres. Regenerative Ag. Association, Emmaus, PA. 1987.

Focuses on location, crop selection and mix, and marketing. Gives insight on marketing strategies, equipment, high value crops. Available for $22.50 from:
American Botanist Sellers
P.O. Box 532, Chillicothe IL 61523.
309-274-5254; FAX: 309-274-6143.

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Directories

National Organic Directory (400 + p)

Available for $50.95 (CA residents add $3.48) from:
CAFF
PO Box 363
Davis, CA 95617

800-852-3832
(lists farmers, buyers, and brokers, sustainable agriculture publications, organic certification groups, state laws etc.)

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Agencies/Associations

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
National Ag. Library
10301 Baltimore Avenue, Room 304
Beltsville, MD 20705-2351
301-504-6559;
E–mail: afsic@nal.usda.gov

Farming Alternatives Program
17 Warren Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
607-255-9832

Food and Agricultural Products Research and Technology Center
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK

The Center's objective is to help develop successful value–added enterprises in OK. For a free fax subscription to the Food Fax Newsletter, fax a request to Peter Muriana at 405-744-6313 or call him at 405-744-5563.

Food Processing Center
University of Nebraska
60 Filley Hall
Lincoln, NE 68583-0928
402-472-5791
Contact Allis Burney

The Entrepreneur Assistance Program helps prospective manufacturers with issues like product development, food safety, market research and selection, packaging and label design, business risk protection, product pricing, image development, regulatory issues, etc.

Hartford Food System (Mark Winne)
509 Wethersfield Ave.
Hartford, CT 06114
860-296-9325; FAX: 860-296-8326

Institute of Food Technologists
221 N. LaSalle St., Suite 300

Chicago, IL 60601
800-IFT-FOOD

Missouri Alternatives Center
628 Clark Hall
Colombia, MO 65211
573-882-1905 or 800-433-3704

Provides information on alternative crops, small farm options and alternative rural opportunities.

National Farmers Direct Marketing Association
14850 Countryside Drive
Aurora, OR 97002
503-678-2455

Organic Farmer's Marketing Association
8364 S. State Road 39
Clayton, IN 46188
317-539-6935
E–mail: cvof@iquest.net

Publishes The Organic Organizer.

Restorative Development Initiative
Collective Heritage Institute
826 Camino de Monte Rey, Suite A6
Sante Fe, New Mexico 87505
505-986-0366
FAX 505-986-1644

Program linking family farmers, including native American growers, directly with progressive companies and markets to facilitate the creation of an alternative agricultural economy outside the commodities market.

Small Farm Center
University of California
Davis, CA 95616-8699
916-752-8136

Published the Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook that describes seed sources, cultivation, production and marketing alternatives for 62 crops. A bimonthly newsletter called Small Farm News is also published. Also available are Considerations in Enterprise Selection, How to Determine Your Cost of Production, Direct Marketing and Quality Control, Marketing Cooperatives, and Setting Up a Roadside Stand, three booklets that cover marketing opportunities for small farmers, and the Small Farm Handbook (169 pp, $24.55) an easy to follow book for prospective farmers, new farmers and farmers who want to start new enterprises.

USDA/RBS Program
Stop 3201, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-3201
202-690-4730

(Rural Business–Cooperative Service (RBS) helps farmers and other rural residents develop cooperatives to obtain supplies and services at lower cost and to get better prices for the products; advises rural residents on developing existing resources through cooperative action to enhance rural living; helps cooperatives improve services and operating efficiency; informs members, directors, employees, and the public on how cooperatives work and benefit their members and their communities; and enclurages international cooperative programs. RBS also publishes research and educational materials, including the Farmer Cooperatives magazine).

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Periodicals

Acreage Advisor
15400 N 56th St.
Lincoln, NE 65814-9706
402-785-2220

Bimonthly 24–page publication geared toward the small farm and acreage owner. One year subscription is $9.95. Contact Phil Pfeiffer.

American Fruit Grower
American Vegetable Grower
Meister Publishing Co.
37733 Euclid Avenue
Willoughby, OH 44094
216-942-2000

The Business of Herbs
439 Ponderosa Way
Jemez Springs, NM 87025-8036
505-829-3448; FAX 505-829-3449
E-mail: olives @jemez.com

Bimonthly, $20 per year.

Country Journal
P.O. Box 500
Mt. Morris, IL 61054

Farm Direct Marketing Digest
P.O. Box 4612

Pasco, WA 99302
509-547-5538; FAX 509-547-5563

Farmers Market Monthly and Farmers Market Outlook
PO Box 4220
Culver City, CA 90231
310-673-8366

Bi–monthly newsletters on California's farmers markets. Carries farmer profiles, updates on new crops, legal and regulatory issues, interviews with chefs, authors, policy–makers and others with and interest in farmers markets. Annual subscription costs $20.

Farming Alternatives Newsletter
c/o Farming Alternatives Program
17 Warren Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
607-255-9832

Gourmet News
PO Box 1056
Yarmouth, ME 04096

The Gourmet Retailer
3301 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Suite 300
Coral Gables, FL 33134
305-446-3388

Growing for Market
Fairplain Publications
P.O. Box 365
Auburn, KS 66402

Subscription is $24/yr.

Labels: Linking Consumers and Producers

Free monthly electronic newsletter from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy that provides news, events and resources related to the labeling of products for environmental, social and regional sustainability. To sunscribe, send e–mail to: majordomo@igc.apc.org. *Leave subject blank. In body, type subscribe label–news.*

MFA Marketing Digest
Minnesota Food Association
2395 University Avenue, Room 309
St. Paul, MN 55114
612-644-2038
Contact: Anne deMeurisse

Reports information of interest to small–scale food producers and processors who are creating a sustainable food system in Minnesota. Features profiles of producers, processors and buyers.

Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener
PO Box 2176
283 Water Street
Farrell Building, 4th Floor
Augusta, ME 04338
207-622-3118

The March–May issue 1996 is full of marketing and production ideas from the Farmer–to Farmer conference. Back issues are available for $4.50.

The Packer
10901 West 84th Terrace
Suite 20
Lenexa, KS 66214
800-255-5116

Gives weekly news about marketing and production of fruits and vegetables. Produces The Packer's Produce Availability and Merchandising Guide with information on vegetable and fruit crops, display and promotion, post–harvest handling, major production areas and other useful details.

Produce Business
Phoenix Media Network
P.O. Box 810425
Boca Raton, FL 33481
561-447-0810

A monthly magazine available for $48. Ask for Fran.

Rural Enterprise
P.O. Box 878
Menomonee Falls, WI 53052-0878
414-255-0100

(discontinued but some back (1986-1992) issues still available. $3 each.)

Small Farm Digest
USDA-CSREES
Mail Stop 2220
1400 Independence Avenue S. W.
Washington, DC 20250-2220
800-583-3071; FAX 202-401-5179
smallfarm@reeusda.gov

Free quarterly newsletter on farm–related trends and developments, announcements,e tc. Also available from this office is the "Getting Started in

Farming" series and other factsheets. See: http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm.

Small Farm Today
3903 Ridgetrail Road
Clark, MO 65243-9525
800-633-2535

Specialty Crop Digest
Homestead Design, Inc.
P.O. Box 1058
Bellingham, WA 98227
360-676-5647

Stockman Grass Farmer
P.O. Box 2300
Ridgeland, MS 39158-2300
800-748-9808

University of Wisconsin Coop Extension
Direct Marketing Newsletter
c/o John Cottingham
Ag. Marketing Specialist
717 Pioneer Tower
University of Wisconsin, Platteville
Platteville, WI 53818-3099
608-342-1392

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Videos and Audios

High–Value Marketing. 1992. Farmer–To–Farmer Series. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA.

To order, send $29.95 to:
Farm Videos, c/o Rooy Media
7407 Hilltop Drive, Frederick, MD 21702
301-473-8797
Contact Rooy Media for other titles in the series.

Gerber, Michael. 1995. The E Myth Seminar. Nightingale–Conant Corp., Niles, IL

(Six sound cassettes on how to run a business. Suggests that most businesses are started by people who want to turn a beloved interest into an occupation.)

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Databases and Listservs

Foodline is a trio of databases providing international coverage of food marketing, technical and regulatory information. Foodline: International Food Market Data is a bibliographic database of global market information from approximately 250 food and beverage and related publications, Foodline: Food Science and Technology, which consists of abstracts from over 550 journals, books, reports and papers; and Foodline: Current Food Legislation, a database summarizing provisions of current food additive regulations and food composition and labeling standards for the U.S. and seven European Union countries.

The USDA's market news service gives daily or weekly updates on wholesale produce/herb/cut flower prices.

http://www.ams.usda.gov/marketnews.htm

The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association started a bi–weekly price report in 1996. Prices are compiled by interviewing 20 farms about what they are charging for currently available organic produce. Items for which retail and wholesale prices are listed include vegetables, berries,tree fruit, herbs, bunched flowers, seedlings, and organic meats. Report available by mail for $10 per season from:

MOFGA,
PO Box 2176,
Augusta, ME 04338.

The Massachusetts Department of Ag. Has information on farmers' markets and direct marketing, mail order businesses at their website www.massgrown.org

For 12 years of research reports, including marketing, try the SARE dababase at www.sare.org/san/projects/.

New Crop Resource Online Program at http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop provides a look at new and specialty crops.

A discussion group about marketing is available on the Internet. To subscribe to direct–mkt, send the following message to majordomo@reeusda.gov

subscribe direct-mkt

For a similar discussion group for small farmers, send message to: majordomo@reeusda.gov Leave subject blank. In the body, type:

subscribe smallfarm-mg

Organic Farmers Marketing Association web site has a public page and a private page where certified organic farmers can discuss markets, prices and other subjects. The private page is open only to members of the Organic Farmers Marketing Association. Send $25 to:

OFMA
PO Box 159
La Farge, WI 54639
Or look up http://www.iquest.net/ofma/

SMALLFARM–MG is a listserve that identifies small farm contacts, farmers and others interested in strengthening the capacity of small and mid–size farmers to improve their income through a systems approach. To subscribe, send mail to: majordomo@reeusda.go. Leave subject blank. In the body, type: subscribe smallfarm–mg. Sustainable Farming Connection is an interactive website with innovative production and marketing information. Visit http://sunsite.unc.edu/farming-connection
Contact:

USDA
AMS, F&V Division
Market News Branch, Room 2503
South Building,
PO Box 96456
Washington DC 20090-6456
http://www.ams.usda.gov/marketnews.htm

A privately published report called the Organic Market News is available for $65/year by mail and $75 by fax. Contact

Farmer's Information Network
PO Box 2067
Santa Clara, CA 95055
408-247-6778

Another is the Organic Food Business News Fax Bulletin available for $205 and published by:

Hotline Printing and Publishing
P.O. Box 161132
Altamonte Springs, FL 32716
407-628-1377

A private website promising Today's Market Prices has, as of October 1999, "reopened the registration to consult" their daily ahd historical prices database, free of charge. See http://www.todaymarket.com for culinary herbs, fruits, and vegetables.

The CA–based federal–State Market News Service gives daily reports of prices and supplies, annual summaries of shipments and prices.

California Department of Food & Agriculture
Division of Marketing Services
State Market News Service
1220 N Street
Room 126
Sacramento, CA 95814

(916)654-1240
http://www.cdfa.ca.gov

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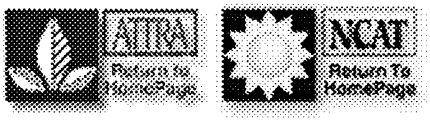
By Katherine Adam, Radhika Balasubrahmanyam, and Holly Born
NCAT Agriculture Specialists
November 1999

ATTRA is the national sustainable agriculture information service operated by the National Center for Appropriate Technology under a grant from the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. These organizations do not recommend or endorse products, companies, or individuals. NCAT has offices in Fayetteville, Arkansas (P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702), Butte, Montana, and Davis, California.



webmaster@attra.org

800-346-9140

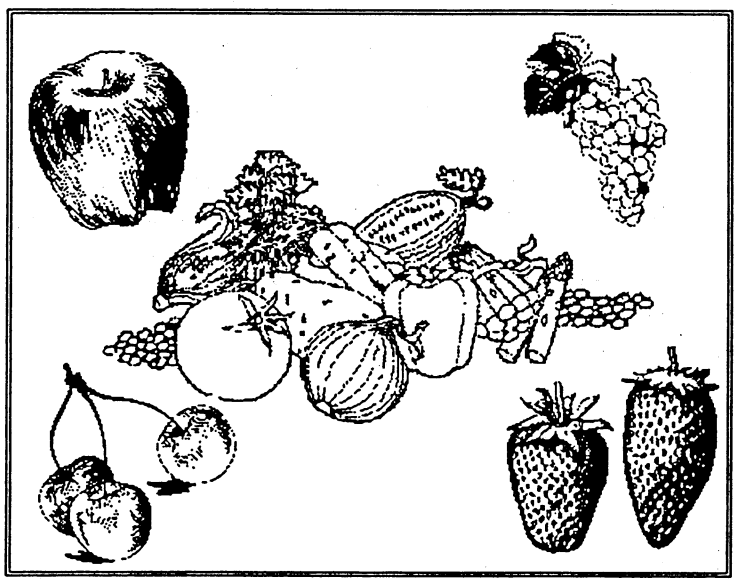
ATTRA
Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas

RESOURCES FOR ORGANIC MARKETING

MARKETING & BUSINESS GUIDE

ATTRA is the national sustainable agriculture information center funded by the USDA's Rural Business – Cooperative Service.

Organic growers often find that the hardest part of successful farming is finding buyers for their products. Many farmers are not interested in direct marketing techniques; others may be seeking a variety of market outlets. This technical note provides some starting points.



Most farmers have heard of or experienced problems with buyers. Some buyers have failed to honor contracts, leaving growers stuck with a crop that they had to sell at a loss or couldn't sell at all. Still others take delivery of the crop, but fail to pay the growers on time or at the agreed-on price, or don't pay the growers at all. The rapidly growing and changing organic market has resulted in many buyers entering and leaving the business. Buyers who were solid last year may be on the verge of bankruptcy this year. The wise farmer will do some investigating. Industry publications are a good first source of information on buyers. When the farmer has identified some potential buyers, he or she should talk to other growers who have done business with the buyer. Most reputable buyers can provide grower references.

CONTENTS

National Information..... 1
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In today's market environment, farmers can no longer be "price takers." A proactive approach to seeking buyers, evaluating offers, and negotiating the best deals is becoming more and more crucial to economic survivability. The farmer will be well advised to learn as much as he or she can about the organic food market in order to make the best possible production, pricing, and market decisions. Reading industry publications can be key in finding out what's in demand now and what looks promising for the future, what price ranges are available for various products, and so on.

National Information

Community Alliance With Family Farmers
PO Box 363
Davis, CA 95617-9900
Tel: 916-756-8518 or 800-852-3832
Fax: 916-756-7857
E-mail: nod@caff.org

The National Organic Directory, published annually by the Community Alliance With Family Farmers, provides a listing of buyers and sellers for organic and transitional commodities. Useful information on farm suppliers and various aspects of the organic market is included, as well as lists of national and regional organizations and other resources. The 1998 issue costs $50.95 or $54.95 for

Agriculture is a risky business. The production and marketing options available to farmers today offer more diversity and flexibility, but also increase confusion about the best ways to use these options. For more information, the USDA has a recent (November 1997) publication *Introduction to Risk Management Handbook* available through ATTRA or accessible on the Web at: http://www.usda.gov/rma/rme/pubs.html>. Also available from:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Risk Management Agency/RME
Room 6755, Stop Code 0803
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0803
E-mail to cwitt@wdc.fsa.usda.gov

The growing popularity of contract production can offer an opportunity for farmers to add value and reduce risk. But the unwary farmer can run into problems with contracting. A farmer considering contract production should know how to evaluate contracts and protect him or herself. *A Farmer's Legal Guide to Production Contracts* (written by an agricultural law expert who is also a farmer) covers contracting in general, with special considerations for grain, livestock, and produce contracts. It is available for $16.95 (Pennsylvania residents add $1.19 tax) from:

Top Producer
230 West Washington Square
Philadelphia, PA 19106

The fruit and vegetable industry deals with very perishable products, where a day's delay can mean the difference between profit and loss. The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) of 1930 requires buyers and sellers of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables to live up to the terms of their contracts, enabling the product to be marketed on time, and provides means of resolving disputes. To learn more about your rights under PACA, contact:

PACA Branch
Fruit and Vegetable Division
AMS, U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 96456, Room 2095-So.
Washington, DC 20090-6456
Tel: 202-720-2890
Fax: 202-720-8868
URL: http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/paca/index.htm

California residents (postage and handling included). It may be the most useful book you ever buy!

Organic Growers and Buyers Association
(OGBA)
362 University Ave. NE, Suite 208
Fridley, MN 55432-3102

Tel: 612-572-1967 or 800-677-6422
Fax: 612-572-2527
E-mail: ogba@sprynet.com

OGBA offers a free quarterly newsletter that provides opportunities to connect with OGBA's client base and others within the organic industrry.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA)
PO Box 1078
Greenfield, MA 01302
Tel: 413-774-7511
Fax: 413-774-6432
E-mail: ota@igc.apc.org

OTA works to increase market access and market demand for organics. They are very active in increasing consumer and retailer interest in organics through a wide variety of promotions. Farmers who are interested in breaking into more mainstream market outlets and/or increasing demand at their current outlets may be especially interested in OTA materials as tools to educate retailers on carrying and promoting organics in their stores. OTA has recently published The Organic Pages, a directory containing over 300 pages listing organic growers, handlers, processors, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and others involved in the organics industry. The first edition is free for OTA members; others pay $50.95 (including shipping). It can be ordered at the address above.

The Organic Farmers Marketing Association (OFMA)
8364 S. SR39
Clayton, IN 46118
Tel/Fax: 317-539-4317
E-mail: cvof@iquest.net
URL: http://web.iquest.net/ofma/

Included among their services is a website that provides members with free advertising space to assist in selling their products. Only members of OFMA are allowed to advertise here, but anyone can respond to sale offerings. The OFMA also has a Consumer Connection page, where people wishing to buy products and find organic growers can advertise.

Organic Verification Organization of North America/US
PO Box 146
Hitterdal, MN 56552
Tel/Fax: 218-962-3264
E-mail: info@organicfood.com
URL: http://www.organicfood.com.

OVONA/US sponsors an Internet site for organic and natural products, where international buyers and sellers can post offers and requests as well as engage in discussions and find out about current research.

Organic Food Business News
Hotline Printing and Publishing
PO Box 161132
Altamonte Springs, FL 32716
Tel: 407-628-1377
Fax: 407-628-9935
$99 per 12 issues

Organic Food Business News offers current prices for organic crops (fresh fruits, vegetable and herbs, dairy, grains, beans, and oilseeds) on a weekly basis through its Organic Commodity Price Fax Bulletin, as well as market outlook reports. The Business News publication is an especially good source of information on specific buyers.

Today's Market Prices offers a free site for buyers and sellers of organic produce and herbs to post at:
<http://todaymarket.com/g3_list.htm>

The Organic Feed Company
P.O. Box 112
Dawson, ND 58428
Tel: 701-327-4249
Fax: 701-327-4455

The Organic Feed Company is a link between sellers and buyers of organic feed and feed materials. This service offers forward contracting or use of current market prices. Call Randy Kinev for more information.

Beta Pure Foods
Morr Pure Foods, Inc.
335 Spreckels Dr. Suite D
Aptos, CA 95003
Tel: 408-685-6565
Fax: 408-685-6569
URL: http://www.betapure.com/bxchange.htm

Beta Pure Foods has an online service that

provides food buyers and sellers assistance in purchasing or selling raw food materials. This service offers forward contracting or use of current market prices. A small brokerage fee is charged only when the product ships. They handle almost all types of organic produce and commodities as well as herbs and other specialty items.

Natural Foods Merchandiser
New Hope Natural Media
Circulation Department
1301 Spruce Street
Boulder, CO 80302
Tel: 303-939-8440
Fax: 303-473-0519
URL: http://www.nfm-online.com/

Natural Foods Merchandiser magazine is an excellent source of information on the natural and organic foods industry. Of special interest are their annual market overviews, presenting the latest statistics and trends in the organic and natural products industries, published in June. You can take a look at current and past issues at their Web site: Subscriptions are $60 per year from New Hope.

There are many other places to begin finding buyers for your crops. Many "conventional" farm magazines and Web services can be good sources of information on buyers for organic crops, particularly soybeans. Here are some online trading groups that have postings from buyers and sellers of organic crops:

Farmer's Market Online
Outrider News Service
Box 277
Shoshone, ID 83352
Fax: 208-886-7602
E-Mail: marketfarm@aol.com
URL: http://www.farmersmarketonline.com

According to Michael Hofferber, manager of the site, there are more than four dozen vendors using the Farmer's Market Online website and email newsletters to make direct contact with consumers and negotiate sales. Hofferber says that using the Internet has helped vendors find buyers at minimal expense. Craft items as well as agricultural products can be sold here, making this a great opportunity to try adding value to your operation. This site also features useful information on marketing and management for the small and/or organic producer. Well worth checking out.

American Food Growers /Farm For Profit
4345 Hwy. 21
Embarrass, MN. 55732
Tel: (800) 232-7693
Fax: (218) 984-3212
URL: http://www.american.growers.com

American Food Growers offers an alternative to organic certification for producers. Qualifying farmers can receive double the market price for their grain, but must pass very rigorous testing in order to produce the "chemical-free" end products marketed by American Food Growers.

The Global Agribusiness Information Network offers a very international site, with buying and selling lists from around the world. Organic and specialty products can be posted here.
<http://www.fintrac.com/gain/bizopps/>

The Natural Brokers' Association has a list of members, by region, available on its Web site. If you are looking for a broker, this might be a place to start.
<http://www.naturalbrokers.com/list.html>

@griculture Online --Agriculture News, Discussion and Information
<http://www.agriculture.com>

AgriNet Trading Network
<http://www.agri-net.com/agrinet/home2.shtml>

FarmWorld - Main Menu
<http://www.farmworld.com/farm/index.html>

Grain Central Home Page is an online grain buying and selling service.
<http://www.graincentral.com>

@g Online hosts a variety of discussion groups, bulletin boards, and mailing lists about marketing issues.
<http://www.agriculture.com/agtalk/Ag_Groups.html/>

Marketing: An international site with postings and discussion.
<http://www.agworldwide.com/scgi/agtalk/discuss_user.cgi?FNC=GroupList__Agroup_html___11___A___AGRIBUSINESS>

MeatMAP Public: Marketing livestock and livestock products on the Internet is a growing trend. Free demonstration available.
<http://www.meatmap.com/>

StratSoy Home Page: Market information and advice from soybean experts is available here, as well as buyer and seller postings and contract information.
<http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~stratsoy/new/welcome.html>

GreenTrade is an international site (in English) which has information for traders in organic products on everyhting from raw materials research to trade contacts. It includes over 718 products from 26 countries. GreenTrade is accessible at:
<http://www.green-tradenet.de/>.

GreenTrade is sponsored by the German company Protrade. Protrade also offers the book *Exporting Organic Products* (1997, 212 pages) for $50 US (including postage). It is available by sending an e-mail or fax to Protrade:

E-mail: evelin.zern(a)gtz.de
Fax: 0049-6196-797414.

Regional Information

Newsletters from organic and sustainable farming groups are often a favorite place for buyers to advertise. Indeed, involvement in these groups can help you in assessing local demand for organic and alternative crops as well as possibly providing cooperative assistance in pooling products for transportation and finding other ways for smaller farmers to cut marketing costs. Contact information for these groups can be found in the National Organic Directory, or request the ATTRA Resource List *Sustainable Agriculture Organizations and Publications* <http://www.attra.org/attra- rl/susagorg.html>.

Many organic certification agencies have information on certified acreage in various crops by region or state, and some also collect more detailed information that may be useful for marketing. ATTRA offers the Information Package *Organic Certification*, which contains contact information for certifying agencies nationwide <http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/orgcert.html>.

Following are some regional resources that emphasize marketing issues.

Midwest Organic Alliance
Ann Woods, Director
400 Selby Avenue, Suite T
St. Paul, MN 55102
Tel: 612-593-2790.
URL: http://www.organic.org/

> *The Midwest Organic Alliance is working to increase the demand for and supply of regionally-produced organic foods. The organic foods come from Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The Alliance works with grain producers, such as the Northern Plains Organic Marketing Cooperative in North Dakota, and dairy cooperatives, such as CROPP in Wisconsin. It is also implementing a marketing program built around a regional organic label, and working with retailers to integrate organic products into mainstream grocery stores.*

Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society
9824 79th St. SE
Fullerton, ND 58441-9725
Tel/Fax: 701-883-4304

> *The Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society (NPSAS) is a non-profit organization*

serving the Dakotas, Montana, Minnesota, and Manitoba. You can also contact the Northern Plains Organic Marketing Cooperative at the address above. They publish Tomorrow's Organic newsletter, where buyers of organic commodities such as soybeans and other grains advertise frequently.

California Cerified Organic Farmers (CCOF)
1115 Mission Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Tel: 408-423-2263
Fax: 408-423-4258

This is the primary certification and trade association for organic growers, traders, and processors in California. CCOF is involved in a wide variety of educational and promotional activities.

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
PO Box 448
Pittsboro, NC 27312
Tel: 919-542-2404
Fax: 919-542-7401
E-mail: cfsa@sunsite.unc.edu
URL: http://www.sunsite.unc.edu/cfsa/index.htm

The Association is involved in organic and local market development and promotion. They publish The Green Book, a marketing directory of alternative and organic markets.

New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission
1000-C Main St. NW
Los Lunas, NM 87301-4820
Tel: 505-841-5530
Fax: 505-841-5549
E-mail: nmocc@nm-us.campus.mci.net

This is a state agency charged with regulating and promoting organic agriculture in New Mexico. Services include market networking and market development.

McGeary Grain, Inc.
PO Box 299
Lancaster, PA 17608
Tel: 800-624-3279/717-394-6843
Fax: 717-394-6931
E-mail: sales@mcgearygrain.com

McGeary Grain is buying certified organic feed-grade corn, soybeans, and other organic protein sources from Ohio to points east and south. They may also buy hay and oats. Call Dave Poorbaugh for more information.

Market research

Market research is available from private sources, with report prices ranging from about a hundred to over a thousand dollars. There is very little publicly available information. Many of the more affordable sources of organic market research data come from the agricultural economics departments of our more progressive land grant universities. The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) provides excellent market information for conventional crops; I strongly encourage you to contact the USDA/AMS and request that they begin gathering price and other important data for organic crops and making it freely available to the public.

In the meantime, here are some sources of convnetional and organic market information available for free or at a fairly low price.

Marketing Organic Produce is a very useful publication that provides some instruction on calcualting production costs and using market window analysis in making planting and marketing decsions. It is available for downloading at :
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/sustainable/publications/organicproduce/organic.html>

The Organic Food and Farming in Canada site has a good deal of marketing and economic information, much of it applicable to the US market:<http://eap.mcgill.ca/RM/RM_P.htm>

Stearns, Larry, and David L. Watt. 1993. *Northern Plains Organic Crops Marketing Analysis: Wheat, Oats, Sunflower.* Agricultural Economics Report No. 293. Contact:

Carol Jensen
Department of Agricultural Economics
North Dakota State University
Fargo, ND 58105-5636

Sparling, Ed, et al. 1992. *Marketing Fresh Organic Produce in Colorado Supermarkets: Final Report.* Contact:

Ed Sparling
Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics
Colorado State University.
Fort Collins, CO 80523
Tel: 303-491-6946
Fax: 303-491-2067

Certified Organic Production in the United States: Half a Decade of Growth (1997, 33 pages) provides a good overview of the organic market, focusing on pro-duction and supply. It is available for $60 from:

AgriSystems International
125 West Seventh Street
Wind Gap, PA 18091
Tel: 610-863-6700
Fax: 610-863-4622
E-mail: agrisys1@aol.com

A Report on Green Food Labels: Emerging Opportunities for Environmental Awareness and Market Development is available for $10 from:

Green Food Labels
40 West 20th St., 9th Floor
New York, NY 10011
Tel: 888-ECO-INFO (888-326-4636)

You may be interested in the new study from The Food Alliance reporting the results of a national survey on consumer attitudes toward "eco-labeling". "Eco-labeling" means that the product carries information on how the product was grown, emphasizing the aspects of sustainable farming that affect the larger environment. The Eco-Label report is $35 for non-members and $15 for members. The Food Alliance has also commissioned other reports on consumer attitudes towards environmentally friendly agricultural products. For more information, contact:

Deborah Kane, Executive Director
The Food Alliance
1829 NE Alberta, Suite # 5
Portland, OR 97211
Tel: 503-493-1066
E-mail: tfa@teleport.com

Marketing Strategies for Vegetable Growers is available for downloading at:
<http://hammock.ifas.ufl.edu/txt/fairs/53677>

Price and other market information for conventional products can be used in market analysis by organic growers. Some of the best sources include:

Vegetables and Specialties Situation and Outlook is published twice a year by the Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20005-4788. It is available on the Web at:
<http://mann77.mannlib.cornell.edu:70/1/reports/erssor/specialty>

Subscriptions to the printed version of this report are available from the ERS-NASS order desk. Call, toll-free, 1-800-999-6779 and ask for stock #VGS, $18/year. ERS-NASS accepts MasterCard and Visa.

The USDA's Market News Service offers weekly reports on price and other market data for a wide variety of agronmic and horticultural crops, including ornamentals and culinary herbs. These are accessible on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/marketnews.htm>

Market News Service data for these terminal markets can be accessed by telephone:

Boston	617-387-4498
Philadelphia	215-597-4536
Seattle	206-764-3753
Honolulu	808-973-9578
New York	718-260-2830
San Francisco	415-705-1300
Miami	305-897-5950

The Small Farm Center at the University of California offers very useful market information and advice through newsletters and fact sheets, most available online. While not dealing specifically with organics, the marketing information available here is applicable to any small producer. Contact:

Small Farm Center
UC Cooperative Extension
1 Shields Ave.
Davis, CA 95616-8699
Tel: 530-752-8136
Fax: 530-752-7716
E-mail: sfcenter@ucdavis.edu
URL: http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/

The Natural Fiber Research and Information Center offers a great deal of economic and market information on natural fibers, such as cotton, silk, wool, and mohair. They are a particularly good source of information on organic and naturally-colored cotton. They offer an online newsletter which compiles production and marketing trends from grower to retail level trade publications. In addition, they will take questions from the public on natural fibers. Their telephone hours are 8 am to 5 pm (CST), Mondays through Fridays. Contact:

NFRIC
Bureau of Business Research
P.O. Box 7459
Austin, TX 78713-7459
Tel: 512- 475-7817
Fax: 512- 471-1063
E-mail: natfiber@uts.cc.utexas.edu
URL: http://www.utexas.edu /depts / bbr/natfiber/

Growing for Market is a monthly newsletter geared to small scale market gardeners which includes information on herb and flower production and prices. It is available for $27/year from:

Growing for Market
PO Box 3747
Lawrence, KS 66046
Tel: 800-307-8949

The Packer magazine is a great source of information on the produce market. Good information on organic commodities can often be found here as well. Basic rates are $65 per year to addresses in the United States; discounts for longer subscription periods and groups of 5 or more are available. Annual publications are free to subscribers, and also may be purchased separately. These include:

Produce Availability & Merchandising Guide covers handling, storage, seasonal availability, grades and packaging, merchandising and nutritional data, and includes 330 commodities and 5,000 shipper listings. ($35)

Fresh Trends magazine presents highlights from The Packer's annual consumer survey on produce purchasing. It includes easy-to-use reports and charts analyzing the factors that most appeal to consumers in various demographic groups. ($20)
Contact:

The Packer
10901 W. 84th Terrace,
Lenexa, Kansas 66214
Tel: 800-255-5113, Ext.748
Fax: 913-438-0695.
URL: http://www.rbcs.com/

Some excellent, but more expensive, sources of organic market research include:

The Evolving Organic Marketplace: A Hartman & New Hope Industry Series Report is a recent (1997) source of information on the organic foods industry that costs $475. Hartman & New Hope also offer specialized market research and consulting services for the organic and natural foods industry.

To order the report or get more information on their services, contact them at:

Hartman & New Hope
10422 SE 14th Street
Bellevue, WA 98004
Tel: 425-452-0818
Fax: 425-452-1506
URL: http://www.hartman-newhope.com

FIND/SVP offers free summary pages of their many market research reports on various commodities, including natural and organic foods. FIND/SVP MarketLooks:Organic Food (Number ML0123, February 1997, 10-16 pages) is available for $200. To view summaries and get more information about the reports and services available, start at the Market Looks section on their Web page.

FIND/SVP
http://www.findsvp.com/mlookad.html
Tel: 1-800-FINDSVP (346-3787)

Prepared by Holly Born
ATTRA Technical Specialist

June 1998

THE ATTRA PROJECT IS OPERATED BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY UNDER A GRANT FROM THE RURAL BUSINESS-COOPERATIVE SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. THESE ORGANIZATIONS DO NOT RECOMMEND OR ENDORSE PRODUCTS, COMPANIES, OR INDIVIDUALS. ATTRA IS LOCATED IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS IN FAYETTEVILLE AT P.O. BOX 3657, FAYETTEVILLE, AR 72702. ATTRA STAFF MEMBERS PREFER TO RECEIVE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE VIA THE TOLL-FREE NUMBER 800-346-9140.

Market Analysis and Pricing

1. Sizing Up the Market Winds 155 kb
2. Product Position 249 kb
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4. Quality Keeps Customers Coming Back to This Farm 70 kb
5. Taste Preferences Outweigh Appearances of Apples 36 kb
6. Selling Organic Produce Poses New Challenges 54 kb
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Legal Considerations

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For more information about this publication, please contact:

Russ Tronstad
Extension Economist

Phone: (520) 621-2425
Email: tronstad@ag.arizona.edu

Direct Farm Marketing and Tourism Handbook

This guide is designed to help farm and ranch operators (and other individuals who grow or process food products) market their products and services directly to the consumer.

You can access the guide online by following the links below. Please note that these pdf files require Acrobat Reader, which can be downloaded free from the Adobe website.

You may also order a hard copy of the guide for $25.00. Quantities are limited, please email tronstad@ag.arizona.edu for ordering information.

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United States
Department of
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Marketing and
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Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Transportation
and Marketing

Wholesale and
Alternative Markets

BLA-132

Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography

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Executive Summary

Direct marketing continues to grow in the United States as a method for small and medium-sized producers to increase their profits. Early results from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Farmers Market Directory show an approximate 10-percent increase in the number of farmers markets since 1996. All forms of direct marketing, farmers markets, public markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture (CSA), and pick-your-own operations, are becoming increasingly popular with consumers who seek fresh and healthful agricultural products.

One way the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) can support farmer direct marketing is to facilitate access to resources for all participants: producers, vendors, market managers, consumers, academics, extension educators, as well as Federal and State employees. This bibliography is an example of that support.

A large body of information exists concerning farmer direct marketing. This bibliography represents the work that has been done since approximately 1980. While some pre-1980 publications have been included, the cut-off date of 1980 was selected based on resource constraints. Twenty-four functional categories are used to divide the references from various resources including private industry, academia, and State and Federal Governments. References were

United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service

Transportation and Marketing Programs

Wholesale and Alternative Markets

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March 2001

Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography 2001

Jennifer-Claire V. Klotz, Economist

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Executive Summary

Direct marketing continues to grow in the United States as a method for small and medium-size producers to increase their profits. The number of farmers markets in the United States increased by 63 percent between 1994 and 2000. There are currently 2,863 seasonal and year-round markets throughout the country.

All forms of direct marketing – farmers markets, roadside stands, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farm to school, and pick-your-own operations – are also becoming increasingly popular with consumers who seek fresh and healthful agricultural products. Direct marketing data collected for the 1992 and 1997 Censuses of Agriculture showed that during this 5-year period, the number of farms involved in direct marketing increased 7.8 percent to 93,140 farms. The total value of direct marketing sales and direct marketing sales per farm also increased.[1]

As the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) increases its involvement in direct marketing, it is important to facilitate access to resources for all participants: producers, vendors, market managers, consumers, academics, extension educators, and Federal and State employees. The objective of this publication is to assist in this process by compiling a bibliography of various documents concerning farmer direct marketing.

The large body of information concerning farmer direct marketing continues to grow. The first version of the Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography was published in November 1998. This 2001 edition contains more than 70 new entries. Three new categories, "Farm to School," "Internet Marketing," and "ATTRA (Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas) Publications," have been added.

The Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography catalogs work that has been done since approximately 1980. While some pre-1980 publications have been included, the cutoff date of 1980 was selected based on resource constraints. Twenty-seven functional categories are used to divide the references from various resources including private industry, academia, and State and Federal Governments. References were compiled from various sources, primarily from bibliographies of individual publications and inquiries distributed on various Internet list servers. The bibliography will be maintained through regular updates on the USDA Farmer Direct Marketing Web page (http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing).

[1] For more information on the Census of Agriculture direct marketing data and a State-by-State breakdown, visit http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/news_04_99.htm#seven.

University of California
Small Farm Center

Fact Sheets for Managing Agri- and Nature-Tourism Operations

Marketing Equals the Four Ps

Part of marketing is identifying the mix of "Ps" that make your service unique. This is also called your *marketing mix.* The next step is to shape your *marketing mix* and *position* its components to create a unique identity for your business that attracts and retains customers. Your market *position* is one or more selected benefits or features that make your operation unique and different.

The following steps will help you define your marketing mix:

- Identify your target market.
- Determine what the target consumer desires.
- Assess whether you have any advantages over your competition in delivering the desired service.
- Choose the position that is most valued by the consumer.

PRODUCT	PLACE (DISTRIBUTION)	PROMOTION	PRICE (COST)
Features	Location	Publicity	List Price
Optional Services	Frequency of Service	Sales Promotion	Discounts
Product Quality	Transportation	Personal Selling	Credit Terms
Staff Quality	Distributors	Advertising	Inclusive/Not
Style	Inventory	Mailing List	Remoteness
Brand Name			
Packaging			
Parking			
Scenic Beauty			
Guarantees			

Possible *Positions* for Marketing Your Operation

1. **The feature** that makes your product or service different than the offerings of competing attractions (e.g., a restaurant on an organic farm, a B&B on an exotic animal farm, a cornfield maze at a u-pick produce stand, etc.)

2. **The length of time** your organization has been in business (e.g., a family-run farm for over a century.

3. **The unique people** involved in your operation (e.g., clinics by a nationally-renowned horse trainer, entertainment by a cowboy poet, home cookin' by a country fair blue ribbon winner, etc.)

4. **Your location** (e.g., in the heart of prime bird watching habitat, within an hour of the pacific Ocean, far off the beaten path, etc.).

5. **The size** of your operation (e.g., a small, intimate inn on a working ranch; a 120,000 acre cattle ranch, etc.).

6. **The benefits** of your product or services (e.g., catch the romantic spirit of the West, restful solitude and tranquility, fulfill a childhood dream, guaranteed catch or wildlife sightings, etc.).

7. **The services** of your organization (e.g., outdoor recreation for young singles).

8. **Your price** (e.g., an affordable family adventure).

9. **Your reputation**

10. **The lifestyle-defining** aspect of your offering (e.g., escape the ordinary, edge of danger rockclimbing, etc.).

This Fact Sheet was adapted by Desmond Jolly, Cooperative Extension agricultural economist and director, UC Small Farm Program, from the Agri-tourism Workgroup and Resources, Oregon Department of Agriculture.

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Wednesday, November 26, 2003 08:08:42

University of California
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Fact Sheets for Managing Agri- and Nature-Tourism Operations

Marketing Your Enterprise

Effective marketing is a key element in any business enterprise. Landowners who do not have experience in marketing a service business often overlook its importance. Even the best-managed fee-recreation business can be unsuccessful if prospective clients are unaware of the enterprise.

Marketing is simply determining what people want, planning and providing products and services to meet those wants, and selecting the most effective ways of reaching those who might pay for these products and services.

Developing a Marketing Plan

Your Business Plan should contain a section that includes your Marketing Plan. Keep your plan simple, define your audience, define your service, and develop a plan for getting information about your enterprise to potential clients. You must remember to budget each year for marketing.

Highlight your key selling points, such as the opportunity for privacy and solitude, in your marketing outreach pieces.

As you develop a marketing strategy you will want to identify the two or three strong selling points of your service or operation. It might be the success rate of a fee-hunting experience, exclusivity and solitude, facilities, location and access to area attractions, price, or other services you provide. Determining your audience first will help choose the key selling points for your marketing strategy.

Marketing Your Business

The type and amount of marketing you use in your fee-based recreation enterprise will depend on the specifics of your operation. Marketing can be as simple as word-of-mouth referral, or involve an intensive regional, national, or international media campaign.

Your marketing style and message must be directed to your identified audience. If you are providing dude-ranch activities, for example, you may emphasize the experience of riding horses and outdoor activities. Anything you print must reflect these selling points in neat, high quality, and tasteful presentation.
Sloppy advertisements or brochures reflect badly on your business.

The three basics of advertising include: the message (the two or three strong selling points

and additional information about your service), the medium (publications, radio, TV, etc.), and the target audience you're trying to reach.

The Message

Your message should tell about the type of activity or enterprise you offer; additional goods and services; directions to your location; costs of the activities; and how to make reservations. Try to be original in your marketing. Keep your message simple. Always check dates, fees, addresses and phone numbers for accuracy. Make certain the goods and services advertised represent what you can deliver. Contact someone experienced in desktop publishing to assist in design and creation of printed pieces if you don't have this experience.

The Medium

Marketing includes a wide range of activities, from public relations and advertising, to promotions and trade shows. Advertising is the most expensive approach. You should carefully consider all the following media and focus on those that fit your budget and reach your target audience. The medium is the method by which the message is delivered to your potential clients. They might include:

Billboards	Local sporting good stores	Trade journals
Booking agents	Magazines	Trade shows
Brochures	Newsletters	Travel agents
Chamber of Commerce	Newspapers	Video tapes
Cooperative Ads	Radio	Visitors Bureau
Direct Mail	Sport shows	Welcome Centers
Local hunting or shooting clubs	Telephone book listing	Word-of-mouth referral
Local referrals	Television	

The Target Audience

Target audiences are distinct groups or segments of clients that you expect to reach when you employ different marketing strategies. You may decide to target your service based on the characteristics of:

1. income level
2. location (in or out-of-state; urban/rural, international)
3. age
4. client preference (lodging, level of involvement -- self guided versus guided, experience, etc.)

If you currently have people entering your property without paying (hunters, fishers, wildlife viewers, etc.) you may want to conduct a survey of their interests and ability to pay for services.

Marketing Costs

The cost of marketing for a fee-recreation enterprise will largely depend on the size and type of your operation, the medium you select, and the number of times you repeat any

advertisements. New operations typically spend 10-25% of total operational costs on marketing for the first few years. It's important to keep good records about response to specific marketing efforts so you can be more effective. Question or survey all customers about how they found out about your operation. With time and reputation, costs for marketing will be reduced.

The Importance of Public Relations

Public relations are defined as the creation and maintenance of a favorable image. It is part of marketing and advertising, but it goes further. As a landowner, you should always be concerned with your business image. Your public relation goals can range from client's satisfaction with their experience, to acceptance of your operation by neighbors, local community leaders, and the general public. It's worth the effort to foster the support of neighbors, state and federal agencies, local sheriff and law enforcement personnel, citizen groups and your local Chamber of Commerce or Visitors Bureau.

This Fact Sheet was adapted by Desmond Jolly, Cooperative Extension agricultural economist and director, UC Small Farm Program, from the Agri-tourism Workgroup and Resources, Oregon Department of Agriculture.

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Wednesday, November 26, 2003 08:12:32

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Fact Sheets for Managing Agri- and Nature-Tourism Operations

Tips for Building Marketing and Community Partnerships

Establishing relationships and cooperative alliances with your community is a key element of long-term success.

1. Speak about your project early with neighbors, family, and local businesses. Share your ideas. Listen to their concerns and feedback. Address any problems early in the development of the project.

2. Develop a comfortable level of public presentation. Have a clear focus of your mission and expected outcomes. Do not let yourself become overburdened by the administrative aspects, the rules and procedures of your project. Keep your eye on the outcomes.

3. Speak about your project at service clubs, association meetings, and other gatherings. Get feedback and modify your presentation. Join the local Chamber of Commerce. Offer to write a regular column for your local newspaper.

4. See your shortcomings or weaknesses as future partnerships. Inventory your community and seek out those who have what you need to complete your goals. Return the favor.

5. Define who shares potential customers with you. Align yourself with other businesses and attractions and openly discuss potential customers. Develop exchange promotions and track the source of your leads.

6. Be innovative. The greatest achievements happen outside the "system." Don't break laws or burn bridges, just be creative.

7. Regarding local ordinances: the government listens to commitments, not complaints, and so do your neighbors. If you cannot turn a negative situation into a positive passion, let it go. Work through compliance issues as required by law and in the spirit of cooperation with surrounding properties and interests.

8. Engage any adversaries. Most people simply want to be heard or are afraid of the unknown impacts. Sit down with them one-on-one and listen. Address the concerns

and do not whitewash them.

9. Keep your business plan and marketing plan in the daylight. Make them work for you. If they are not working for you, then change them. Use your plans to support your actions and efforts.

10. Work to foster a sense of community and personal responsibility among citizens.

11. Manage physical growth of your operation to ensure quality of life for all citizens affected.

12. Work with other businesses to encourage small town character and support of locally owned businesses.

13. Build on the agricultural, timber and other resource based assets in the area.

14. Maintain and enhance historic structures.

Adapted from "Your Town" Pacific Northwest Workshop, August 24-27, 1995, and Dan Hoynacki, VISIT Group, May 1997

This Fact Sheet was adapted by Desmond Jolly, Cooperative Extension agricultural economist and director, UC Small Farm Program, from the Agri-tourism Workgroup and Resources, Oregon Department of Agriculture.

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Wednesday, November 26, 2003 08:08:21

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Fact Sheets for Managing Agri- and Nature-Tourism Operations

Top Marketing Ideas for Agri-tourism Operations

By Mike Wetter, Consultant,
Mike Wetter and Associates

1. **Happy customers are the most important key to success.** They will return, and they will tell their friends about your operation. Learn their names. Remember what they like and have it ready for them. Keep a database if you can't keep it all in your head. The little touches make all the differences.

2. **Develop a mailing list.** Get names from outdoor magazines, associations, and other sources of people that like outdoor activities. Your mailing list is your most important asset. Mail to your customers at least twice a year.

3. **People don't come to hunt or fish or ride a horse or tractor.** They come to have fun and relax. You are in the hospitality business; take care of your customers and you will succeed. Always ask your customers what they liked about their stay and what could be improved.

4. **Cater to as "high end" a customer as you can** and don't be afraid to charge for your service. This is not a volume business, so you can't go low-end and make money. If you target people with money and charge more for your service, people will expect more from you. You don't have to be "upscale", but you do need to offer a quality experience.

5. **Take care of details.** Make sure that your telephone is answered professionally ("Anderson Ranch" rather than "hello"). Your answering machine should have a professional message. Return calls promptly.

6. **Let your neighbors know about you.** Join the Chamber of Commerce, talk to gas station owners, cafes, Elk clubs, motels, and neighboring farms. Give people your brochure and make sure that people in your area know about you. Start close to home at first and move out gradually.

7. **Send information about your company to magazines and newspapers.** Send them news releases and story ideas. Invite them

out for a free stay. Follow mailings with personal calls. Think of things that will interest them.

8. **Obtain brochures and literature from other operations that are similar to yours.** See what they are offering and what it costs. Look at their brochures to see what you like and don't like. Improve your materials accordingly. Get addresses and phone numbers of operations from outdoor recreation magazines. Owners are generally willing to give you a half-hour of free advice. Call them and tell them you are just starting out and ask if you can have a few minutes of their time to ask some questions.

9. **Advertise in the telephone book.** Consider placing an ad in the Yellow Pages in target markets. Put signs on your property that are visible from the road. Make sure people can find you and have a way to contact you.

10. **Produce quality brochures and PR materials.** On brochures, less is more. Don't clutter it with lots of words. Use photos. Hire a graphic artist or get lots of feedback from other business people before you go to print. Don't use a photocopier. Color is costlier than a black and white brochure, but it shows a commitment to quality and attracts a lot more attention.

This Fact Sheet was adapted by Desmond Jolly, Cooperative Extension agricultural economist and director, UC Small Farm Program, from the Agri-tourism Workgroup and Resources, Oregon Department of Agriculture, to which Mike Wetter, consultant, contributed.

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MARYLAND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
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Fact Sheet

FREDERICK COUNTY OFFICE • 330 MONTEVUE LANE • FREDERICK, MD 21702-8200
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OPERATING A PROFITABLE SMALL FARM

FACT SHEET 15

Marketing Skills

Terry E. Poole
Extension Agent, Agriculture Science
Frederick County, MD

I. Packaging

How you present your product has a lot to do with marketing it. Packaging is not feasible or necessary in all marketing situations; nor does it have to be fancy at every market. Packaging at roadside stands can be very basic or simple. However in markets where you are in direct competition with other producers, you will want to be more elaborate or creative with your packaging. The *package should reflect the market* for your product. If it is going to be sold in an upscale store, specialty shop, or as gourmet, the package should show that this is a product worth paying a higher price. Product sold to restaurants usually does not need fancy packaging.

Packaging can do a lot for a product. It can extend the shelf life, protect during handling, provide information about the product to the customer, and attract attention. At direct markets, produce is usually displayed in wooden baskets and transferred to paper bags/boxes at sale. This allows the producer to display the product in a rustic manner and save the cost of the packaging.

If at all possible, try to have the farm logo, or other identifying feature printed on everything possible leaving the farm (bags, boxes, labels, packages, etc.). This is a great way to get the word out on your product. Also, recipes and information tags on the package can help to sell it.

II. Displays

Bulk displays are useful for marketing some items. Products that are delicate, easily bruised or damaged should not be bulk displayed, people will trash some items. For visual appearance, bulks displays should not be piled too high (about eye level) and should be consistent, free of rotten/ insect

infested products. Some of this product can be prepackaged for the commuter who wants a quick stop and is not interested in picking through a bulk display.

In direct markets, *attracting customers to your market is critical to survival*; without customers your business will die. Creative signs and displays are proven methods of attracting customers. Unusual or speciality items can attract customers as well as having a sale on an item. The only limits in this area is your imagination. Be sure that the prices of your products are clearly marked or posted; customers in a hurry are no going to bother to ask the cost of items.

III. Customer Service

The success of your farm business will depend largely on how you treat your customers. A good customer service program will help you to reduce the loss of customers, gain new customers, and improve the satisfaction level of current customers. It has been estimated that caring more about customers can potentially reduce the number of lost customers by about two-thirds. Studies have shown that the reasons customers leave are as follows:

1% Die
3% Move away
5% Shop where friends work
9% Competitive reasons
14% Product dissatisfaction
68% Indifferent attitude of staff

The problem with dissatisfied customers can be worse than you think. Typically, 96% of unhappy customers will not complain; for every unhappy customer that complains, you probably have twenty-four unhappy customers that do not complain. The reasons most often given by customers for why they do not complain are: 1) Usually don't get results, and 2) Customers "think" you don't want to hear their complaints.

Dissatisfied customers can ruin your farm business. They will relay their unhappiness with you to 9 or 10 of their friends. Usually, 12% tell more than twenty people. Thirty percent usually will stop buying your product.

A business should be thankful for customers who complain. They can alert you to problems you missed. Most of them can be turned into loyal customers; 95% will remain good customers if the problem is resolved quickly. Once the problem has been solved, they will tell 4 or 5 people about their experience. It is estimated that it costs 5 times more to get a new customer than to keep an existing one.

Studies have found that customers are offended by different things. However the offenses that are the most common are as follows:

- Failure to acknowledge their presence
- Not listening attentively
- Not knowing the merchandise
- Being verbally abusive
- Shoddy work
- Arguing with them
- Failure to keep your word
- Policies are not enforced

There are some basic building blocks that can be used when developing a customer service program. *Find out what the customer wants and needs.* Ask questions to determine the facts and listen carefully to them. *Build relationships with your customers* by taking a genuine interest in them and listen to them with sincerity. *Always help your customers,* show that you have their best interest at heart. For example, refer them to someone else if you cannot help them, and personally see to it that their problem is solved; then offer further help and advice. *Always be sure to keep your work area clean and neat.* Make a point to *recognize your customers at once* when they come and give them your complete attention. *Tell them what you can do, not what you cannot do for them.*

Angry customers should always be handled with care. You need to recognize that the anger is not directed at you personally. Try to help the customer deal with the problem in a rational manner. You can help to dissipate their anger by letting them express their feelings, by listening sympathetically, and by empathizing with them. Help them find a solution. Ask open ended questions; get them to agree. Show them that you sincerely care about helping them.

The owner/operator should set the example for good customer relations. Your actions convey your attitude and sincerity towards this critical part of your farm business. Make sure that your employees and other family members working in the business are "schooled" in customer relations and are *familiar with the customer service policy of your business.* It is a good idea to put this in writing.

Make it known to your customers that you care; solicit complaints and keep a record of them. You can put signs up, add it to your advertisements, have slogans, or written statements on your position on customer satisfaction. Always make customers comfortable when they are complaining. Remember that age old business saying, "The customer is always right". Directing your farm business policies towards this old saying may help you become more profitable in your farm business.

Reference: *Sell What You Sow: A Guide to Successful Produce Marketing* by Eric Gibson

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OPERATING A PROFITABLE SMALL FARM

FACT SHEET 13

Direct Marketing

Terry E. Poole
Extension Agent, Agriculture Science
Frederick County, MD

I. Pros and Cons

There are several benefits associated with direct marketing. The potential for making higher *profits* due to the elimination of the middleman is the one that comes to mind first. Direct marketing saves costs in packaging, handling, and transportation. The *cash flow* in direct marketing is directly between you and the customer, so the flow is much quicker. You do not have to wait for a middleman to send you a check. Direct marketing works well for *small farms,* because it permits a *diversity* of production and there are no pressures on the volume of production. You are free to grow what you want and as much as you want. Direct marketing does give you some *marketing control.* You are in a position to set your own price.

There is a downside to direct marketing. The *volume* of product sold through direct marketing is often not as great as with some other marketing methods, however the typically higher prices received should compensate for the lower volume. Direct marketing requires more of a commitment in *time.* You need to be at the market selling your product. You will need to have some *people skills* in order to deal directly with your customers. While people are not always pleasant, you are expected to always maintain a happy face. If you are to be a success at selling your product, you will need to have some *marketing skills.* Selling your product is more than simply parking your truckload of produce along Route 194. This is a very competitive market. Your challenge is going to be convincing people to buy your product and to keep them as customers. The reality of it is that not everyone is cut out to be a direct marketer.

II. Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are one of the fastest growing direct marking sources of agricultural produce in the country. There are several farmers markets located within a short drive here in central Maryland. Farmers markets are popular with both the producer and the public.
There is usually very little preparation necessary for the producer and the public enjoys the convenience of locally grown, fresh produce.

There are some benefits associated with farmers markets. They are ideal for new producers, because of the minimal *startup* costs and elementary marketing skills needed. The best feature about farmers markets is the *direct interaction* between the producer and the customer. This permits the producer to promote the product and to receive feedback from the customer. Farmers markets have all of the drawbacks associated with direct marketing. In addition, you can add *bad weather*. A producer can easily waste a whole day sitting at a farmers market in the rain waiting for customers who never show up. The producer's *comfort,* being out in the weather for the length of the market is another factor to consider. *Time* itself should be a consideration; a producer can plan to spend the better part of a day sitting at the market. Producers close in area are in *direct competition* with each other. Some marketing skills will be needed to sell some less popular items and to obtain higher prices for others. Sometimes the challenge is simply trying to get them over to your table. Signs and attractive displays are often successful at getting the customer to visit you. Another issue with farmers markets is their *regulations/ policies*. One of the most consistent policies is that you sell only what you produce. If you cannot operate within this rule or others set forth by market management, a farmers market is not for you.

III. Roadside Markets

Roadside markets are fixture of the summer landscape along many of our highways. There must be a roadside market every quarter of a mile along Route 50 as you leave Ocean City, MD. They can be successful places for large and small producers to market their products. In much the same way as farmers markets, the public uses the roadside stand as a convenient place to buy locally grown produce. The key to successful roadside marketing is *attracting repeat customers*. They in turn will spread the word about your wonderful stand.

There are some benefits with roadside markets. Producers can *save costs* with transportation, packaging, and middleman costs. The produce is marketed near where it is produced and displayed in bulk or in minimal packaging. There is not usually a direct competitor sitting beside you. Some road signs and *"catchy" displays* are needed to get people to stop. Just as in the farmers market, you need to find ways to attract people to your market. The only difference is that in this case the customers could be traveling 60 mph down the road.

Roadside markets have some disadvantages. They will require higher *overhead costs* that include the building, repairs, parking lot, utilities, and taxes. There will also be *zoning issues and more planning involved.* As you might expect, *location* is the key to successful roadside marketing. The stand needs to be convenient and easy to find. It should be located near enough to well traveled, main roads so that repeat customers will stop by regularly and new customers will not have to hunt for you along an unimproved back road. There should be enough parking to accommodate the heaviest anticipated

crowd, with easy and safe access in and out of the parking area onto the highway. The *facilities and buildings* are one of the first things people see of your stand, so its appearance has much to do with your marketing plan. Stands can include pole buildings, renovated barns, tents, pickup trucks or a card table. It is important to put the best face possible on your stand. Make your stand look attractive, creatively present your products, and always keep it neat and clean.

IV. Subscription Marketing

Subscription marketing is a relatively little known method of selling your products, that is being successfully practiced by some producers in the area. In subscription marketing, *customers pay a fee in advance of the season* and *place an order for the products they want for the season.* During the season the *producer packages up the customers order* and delivers it to a drop site or it my be picked at the farm. *A record is kept* of the products purchased and accounting is done at the end of the season. Money is not exchanged during the season. The advantage of subscription marketing is that the producer knows prior to the season what to produce and how much. The crop is sold before it is put in the ground. There are some major drawbacks to this marketing system. The subscription marketer is going to need some tremendous people skills. There is a lot of customer interaction and potential for "customer relations" situations in this type of operation. Also, because of the time required for servicing customer orders and needs, there is a limit to the number of customers you can have in your "club". This limits your production and income.

V. Pick-Your-Own Marketing

Pick-your-own farming operations, where the customer comes to the farm and harvests their own produce, has been a successful method of marketing for some large and small farm operations in the region. It seems so easy to just plant your crop and have people come and pay to harvest it. However, someone once said that, "if it was so easy then everyone would be doing it". There are some advantages and disadvantages associated with pick-your-own marketing.

The biggest advantage of pick-your-own marketing is the *reduction in costs* in several areas of your operation. These include the reduced need for hiring people to come in to harvest crops. However you will need to hire extra labor to serve as "people movers". Customers will have to be directed (lead) to fields that are to be picked and kept out of other places. Transportation, packaging, handling, and storage are other areas where costs are saved. Also, for this reason, this type of operation is less expensive to get started. Typically, customers will usually *purchase more produce at a visit* to a pick-your-own than with other marketing methods.

There are a number of disadvantages with pick-your-own markets; it is not for everyone. By its very nature the *producer allows the public to come onto the farm* and roam around. Some producers cannot deal with this, so PYO is out for them. Insurance companies are also not thrilled with this, so they will increase the *liability insurance.* The producer has to accept the fact that *customers will damage some plants and produce*, and they will generally " pick-over" the crop. *Bad weather* will chase away customers. This can be a problem with a limited harvest period and a prolonged weather pattern. People do not like to work when it is too cold, too hot, or too rainy.

During the season PYO operations require long hours, since you need to meet the schedules of a wide range of customers. There will need to be adequate parking and lanes into the farm and field sites. There will be *labor costs* for hiring cashiers and people movers for the picking season. The *price received at PYO operations is often less* than that received in other marketing methods.

Reference: *Sell What You Sow: A Guide to Successful Produce Marketing* by Eric Gibson

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OPERATING A PROFITABLE SMALL FARM

FACT SHEET 17

Advertising and Promoting Your Product

Terry E. Poole
Extension Agent, Agriculture Science
Frederick County, MD

I. Mission: Attracting Customers

Your farming operation could produce the best products in the region and your market could provide the best service in Frederick, but your farm business would suffer until you were able to attract customers to your market site. Successfully advertising and promoting your operation and products is as important as any other part of your farm business operation.

II. Promotion

Before you begin the task of promoting your farm business operation, you first need to identify what kind of business you are, who are your customers, and what are you going to provide? You will need to develop an image and style that fits your personality and the perception of the business you wish to convey. Before you begin your promotional campaign, be sure that you are ready and are able to fulfill or live up to your promotion ads. Remember that promotion can bring a customer in one time, but only quality and service will bring them back again.

Develop a promotion plan. This plan doesn't have to be anything complicated. Developing a plan helps to bring all your thoughts together, get them organized, and provides you with a set of guidelines to follow as you undertake your project. Your plan should begin with an *objective*. It is here where you write down what it is you want to accomplish with your promotional campaign. Examples can be increasing the number of customers, sales, or public recognition of your business. The next items in your plan are: 1) What is the *message* to be conveyed in the campaign and 2) Who is the *audience* you want to hear this message? How you are going to get this message delivered to your target audience, your *strategy,* is the next item in your plan. This will include public relations, advertising, and news releases. The final item in your plan is the *budget.* This is where you figure out what your promotional campaign is going to cost.

A well thought out, organized public relations campaign can be an extremely effective method of promoting recognition of your farm business operation and products at a minimal cost. Supplying fruit baskets, hats, and t-shirts for door prizes and table center pieces all with your logo or farm name at area community functions are very effective public relations opportunities. Offering tours of your farm and special school functions such as pumpkin picking during the Halloween season is another. It will not hurt if your operation is known for its public service as well. Providing food items to the needy will be good for you personally and good for your business. Taste-testing and free product samples at fairs and community shows are fantastic for getting your logo and name known to the public.

III. Advertising

Advertising in today's market can be very expensive, especially for the small farm budget, so you are going to have to make it pay. Be sure to exhaust all the resources for free promotion and advertising before you decide to buy advertising. Take a good look at the cost and what you can reasonably expect in return; don't do it unless you can afford it and are sure it is worth it. Find some ways to evaluate your advertising. Certainly measuring the increase in sales or people visiting your business are ways. Some others can include the use of redeemable coupons and asking customers to fill out a brief survey that includes how they heard about your business. This also accomplishes getting them on your mailing list.

There are several different ways available to you to advertise your farm business operation. How you do it largely depends on your budget, audience, and your personal style of presenting your message. There are pros and cons with each method of advertisement; you simply need to select the method(s) that fit your needs the best. Newspapers, radio, and television will reach large numbers of people, but are expensive. Road signs are effective for operations that are dependent upon capturing the attention of people traveling along a highway. Direct mail flyers, postcards, and newsletters are effective at maintaining contact with customers and should fit in well with a small farm promotional plan. Mailings are great for informing customers of what you will be offering, about when it will be available, and what is new with your farm business. This type of advertising can take some time, but the personal touch is good for customer relations. Personal computers make this task much easier today. The challenge will be to develop and maintain a mailing list. Coupons and drawings for prizes are a couple of painless ways to develop a mailing list.

Reference: *Sell What You Sow: A Guide to Successful Produce Marketing* by Eric Gibson

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RESOURCE PACKET:

DEVELOPING NEW MARKETS TO SUPPORT LOCAL AGRICULTURE

- Tapping New Markets
- Creating A Regional Product Identity
- Promoting Local Wholesaling

Farming Alternatives Program
Department of Rural Sociology
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Growing for Market

news and ideas for market gardeners

Volume 5, Number 5 May 1996

The art, science of market displays

One of the maxims of selling anything in a retail setting is that you have about three seconds to catch the customer's eye. At a farmers market, the window of opportunity may be even smaller, with so much color, fragrance and activity calling out to shoppers from every direction. With so little time to make your sale, you need a display that will stop shoppers in their tracks and pull them to your market stand. And how do you do it? First, learn the tricks of the trade - merchandising strategies that work for supermarkets and that will work for you, too. Go to the supermarket and survey the produce section. Notice what catches your attention as you scan the displays, and try to figure out why that particular display appeals to you.

"You really have to think like a retailer, because that's what you are - you're putting a store in the back of your truck," says Mark Phillips, who grows 125 acres of vegetables near Milford, New Jersey, and sells at the New York City Greenmarket. "Any farmer who just puts stuff on tables and hopes it sells is probably going to be disappointed."

Phillips and Tony Mannetta, assistant director of Greenmarket, offered many observations about the art of display at the 1996 North American Farmers Direct Marketing Conference in Saratoga Springs, New York. Greenmarket is the city-sponsored farmers market system that includes 20 market sites and 200 farmers. The markets are immensely popular - at the Union Square market, for example, 90 vendors sell four days a week to 30,000 shoppers. With that kind of trade, Mannetta and Phillips have become experts in the art of selling produce.

Photo by Tony Mannetta

This farmer at the Greenmarket in New York City uses two smart techniques for creating an appearance of plenty: overturned baskets spilling produce, and a second tier of smaller items.

An illusion of bounty

"People are attracted to large displays," Mannetta says. "They like to think they have a choice." Don't put out a small display of an item and plan to replenish it from a supply kept under the table or in the truck. Instead, get as much out in front of the customer as you can - even more than you expect to

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Appeal to your customers' senses at market

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sell.

"I won't put one crate of lettuce out," Phillips says. "I'll put 10 out and bring a half of one back home and throw it away."

Mannetta recommends that you stack your produce to create an appearance of plenty and to make it more visible from a distance. Start stacking from a few feet above the ground (never put food on the ground) and make tiers that reach above your waist on the table. Every item should be tilted to give the customer a better view and make your supply look larger. On the table top, don't settle for just one level of produce. Stack boxes at the ends and stretch a board across them to create a second tier for smaller items.

Even if you don't have large quantities of produce you can create an illusion of bounty by turning baskets on their sides with the produce spilling out from them.

Using color

Mixing colors is an important aspect of the art of display. Group your produce to create large blocks of color, then group produce of a contrasting color beside it.

"Yellow is a real eye-catcher," Mannetta says. "Farmers use it on the corner of a display even if they have only a little bit."

Phillips likes to make checkerboards of black and red raspberries or yellow and red tomatoes in quart boxes, tiered on red plastic crates.

Go easy on the plastics, though, Mannetta advises. "We really feel that wood is the way to go," he says. "People are looking for that natural feeling and wood brings home that message."

The neutral colors of natural materials help accentuate the bright colors of the produce. Baskets are a perfect display medium, and even cardboard boxes can be wrapped in burlap sacks to look more "natural". One grower makes "nests" for large items of produce by wrapping sisal rope around the crates.

Mannetta says that a dozen buckets of flowers on the corner of a stand will catch glances from far away and attract customers like a magnet.

Also, don't let your produce get dry and dull-looking. Mist it regularly to keep the colors bright.

Say it with signs

People don't want to have to ask for prices and they don't want to appear ignorant, so label everything, these experts say. Start with a sign full of information about your farm. "We grow everything we sell," one farm reassures customers, even though that's true for all the other vendors, too, since Greenmarket prohibits people from bringing in produce they didn't grow. Single-commodity farmers - particularly those who can't put their product on display - need bright, arresting signs. A big black-and-white cow advertises a dairy that has to keep its wares refrigerated. A bright yellow chicken does the job for a poultry farmer.

Signs should provide the information to entice your customers to buy. "Rocambole garlic - large cloves, easy to peel" is much better than just a simple "Garlic" sign. Some growers paint the name of the item on wood, and write the price on a card that can be attached, to give them flexibility to change prices. One Greenmarket farmer uses small chalkboards from a toy store and tucks them into the baskets behind the produce.

Beyond the basics

Phillips advises you to use fragrance to attract customers. Squash a couple of strawberries on the hot pavement, and the smell will waft through the air. Brush the basil every time you walk past it.

Mannetta suggests bringing things from the farm to attract attention. A cider press, even if it's not being used, brings over curious shoppers. Bales of straw are a great substitute for a table, particularly with fall crops, and sometimes you can even sell the bales, too. Animals can't be beat as an attention-getter. Every parent in the market will bring their children over to pet your lambs or look at your rabbits. Last year, one farmer brought a baby goat and had a "kid-naming" contest that kept his stand packed all day.

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Photo by Tony Mannetta

Even small items can make a big visual impact by creating tiers of the product. This berry grower markets her jellies, vinegars and other value-added products by stacking them in pyramids the full width of the table.

Market displays...

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Phillips suggests that you put as much stuff between the customers and the checkout as you can, so that they will have an additional opportunity to buy more on their way to the scales. "We make people walk 30 feet past islands of produce," he says. "They're standing in line and looking at the display."

He uses 14 to 16 tables at his farmers market stand, and it takes five people several hours to set it all up. Then he stands back 20 feet to have a look at the big picture. "If it doesn't look good to you, it isn't going to look good to your customers," he says.

Mannetta says, "A little whimsy never hurts." A wheatgrass grower covers his truck with flats of wheatgrass, making it appear to be covered in a carpet of green. Another grower advertises "The Official New York Mets Souvenir Cabbage."

Finally, Mannetta says, "No display is complete without a smile." An artistic display may bring the customers over to your stand, but it's your attitude that is going to make the sale. A friendly, warm demeanor will keep them coming back week after week.

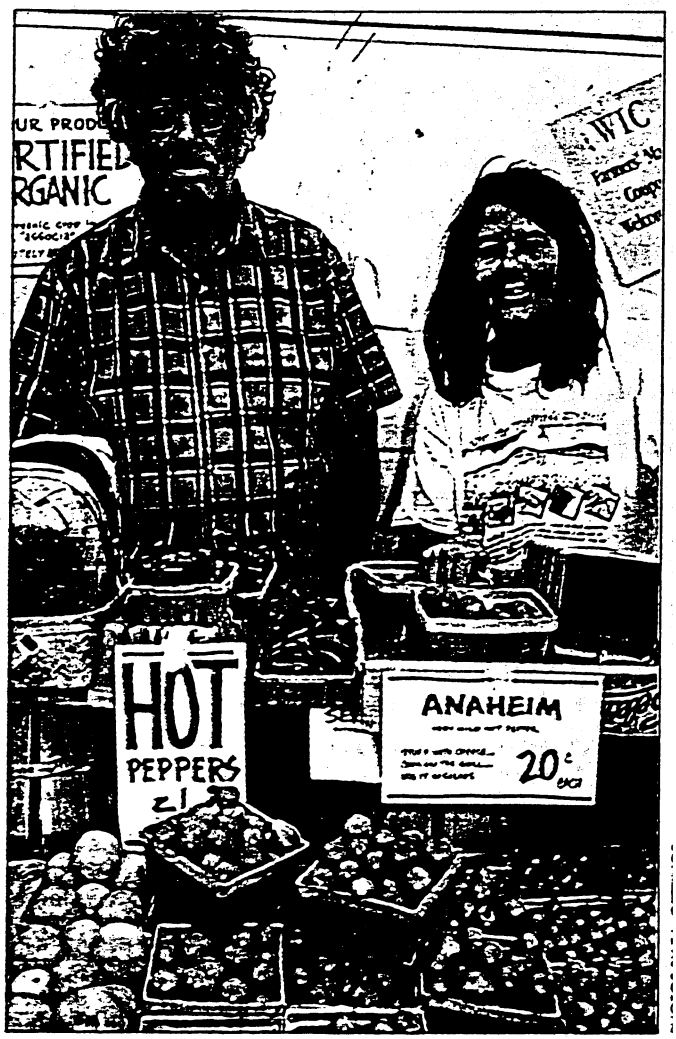
Mini-Farm, Maxi-Profits

DIVERSE CROPS AND SAVVY MARKETING GIVE THESE HIGH-VALUE GROWERS THE EDGE.

DOTT, Pa. — On the big map of American agriculture, Flickerville Mountain Farm and Groundhog Ranch is little more than a flyspeck. It's just 10 acres of certified organic vegetables and flowers, scattered in beds and patches suggesting a garden that got too big for its britches.

But appearances can deceive. Although the computers at USDA may never recognize the significance, our little farm ranked in the top 15 percent of *all* U.S. farms, with gross sales of more than $103,000 in '93.

Consider that for a moment, remembering that we're still in an era driven by the notion that bigger is better. Our farm grosses more than $10,000 per acre. That's about six times more than the average Pennsylvania vegetable operation. Put another way, a Midwestern corn grower would need 500 acres of 100-bushel corn selling at $2 to gross that much. We understand the reluctance of most farmers to publicly talk about their sales figures. We're not trying to brag. We just think sharing our experiences may help others spot similar opportunities. Maybe you're one of the folks who can take these ideas and run with them.



WARD SINCLAIR AND CASS PETERSON GROSS MORE THAN $103,000 PER YEAR, WITH ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF THEIR SALES AT FARMERS MARKETS.

WORDS TO THE WISE

Right off the bat, we'll raise several caveats: Farming on this scale is expensive — in terms of management and labor as well as the cost of supplies. The work is demanding. There are no days off between March and Thanksgiving. The hours are long. There's too much time on the road, and the psychic drain also takes its toll.

The high gross becomes academic if your net can't sustain the farm. In our case, net before taxes has been in the range of 25 to 30 percent. That's enough for a comfortable (though not posh) living in south-central Pennsylvania. Our gross hasn't peaked yet. It continues on the upswing as we capitalize on what we do well and drop items that don't pay. Neither of us is even thinking about returning to our old city jobs and the rat race.

DIVERSITY IN THE FIELD IS THIS COUPLE'S BEST CROP INSURANCE. WIDE BEDS BORDERED BY MOWED GRASSES, SUCCESSION PLANTINGS, COVER CROPS, AND FLOWERS FOR PICKING [illegible]D MANAGING INSECTS ARE PART OF THE FLICKERVILLE FARM SYSTEM.

BY WARD SINCLAIR AND CASS PETERSON

Mar/Apr 1994 Vol 16 #3

There really is no magic formula for our success. What seems universal — to this size farm, farming in general, and almost any business venture — is being sensitive to marketing possibilities and tailoring your production to meet them.

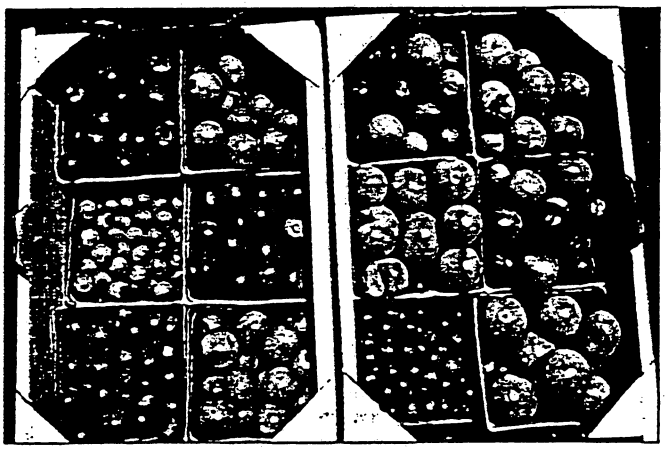
It's always been clear to us that there are virtually unlimited market niches waiting to be filled. But some of the agricultural economists who have visited us act puzzled when we open our books and lead them through the patchwork of beds where we grow more than 70 kinds of vegetables, 50 varieties of flowers and an array of fruits and herbs. The common academic wisdom is that this is ... well, either crazy or impossible.

But there is a method to our madness. Several key concepts guide the Flickerville *modus operandi*, we explain to the curious to help them make sense of it all. The keys involve lots of record-keeping, micromanagement, succession plantings, reading, listening to customers and constant attention to making lemonade out of lemons. Among the rules that underpin our efforts:

- *Avoid wholesaling.* At all costs.
- *Constantly seek variety.* But quickly drop what doesn't work or doesn't pay.
- *Ignore the experts.* Especially when they tell you to grow the same old veggies. We grow unusual stuff. Then we sell it by helping customers understand what it is and how to use it.
- *Establish planting patterns* that allow a single patch to yield two, three or even four different crops each season. But don't plant more than your retail markets can absorb.
- *Sell everything that grows.* From Grade A Fancy to undersized culls — even if they require special labeling and handling.

THE STILL-LIFE THAT SINCLAIR AND PETERSON PAINT AT EACH MARKET WITH THEIR PRODUCE IS INTENDED TO OVERWHELM CUSTOMERS WITH CHOICES — DIFFERENT COLORS, SHAPES AND SIZES THAT THEY HOPE WILL BE IRRESISTIBLE.

CHERRY TOMATOES, BELOW, ARE A PAIN TO PICK, BUT WORTH THE TROUBLE. THE 12 VARIETIES SINCLAIR AND PETERSON SOLD IN '93 FOR $1.25 PER PINT GROSSED $4,980 — MORE THAN THEIR STANDARD-SIZED TOMATOES.



Obviously, these rules can't work for every farm — nor should they. But they work for us because they help make the most of limited resources and draw attention to us in the marketplace.

PRESIDENTIAL TOMATOES

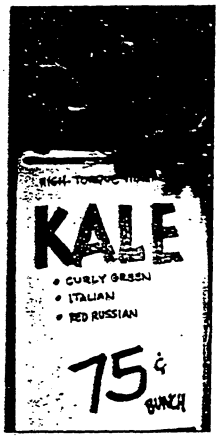
In '93, we sold roughly 70 percent of Flickerville's output at "producer-only" outdoor markets in Hagerstown, Columbia and Takoma Park — all Maryland communities in the Washington metro area. The remainder went to upscale restaurants and about 80 "subscribers" at *The Washington Post*, where we used to work. The subscribers receive a weekly delivery of prebagged seasonal produce from early June to late September.

The $70,000-worth of farmers market sales is a far cry from our first produce-selling experiences. (See sidebar "From $11/Week To $103,000/Year" on page 36.) Early in the game, we realized there are two equally important sides to this kind of farming: One was learning what to grow and how to grow it. The other was selling it. We quickly found out that a farm of this size could not succeed by wholesaling. Even for organically grown stuff, the price just wasn't there.

We also decided it didn't make sense to compete with standard items such as sweet corn and melons. Even if our Chevy van could handle the weight of a load of melons, they could never hold a candle to a truckload of cantaloupes from Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Lettuce, on the other hand, was hugely popular at the markets. But most farmers offered it for only a few weeks in spring. Obviously, here was a major gap to be filled if we could find a way to grow lettuce throughout the season. It took awhile. But after experimenting with varieties and cultural techniques, we are able now to harvest lettuce from late April until well after the first fall frosts.

That same kind of trial-and-error process taught us other realities. We found out the hard way that brassicas just don't do well here in spring. So we've given up on most of them. But they do spectacularly well in fall. So we



have expanded fall plantings and brought a whole range of new fall greens to the markets — even though we can't pronounce all of the names. (Some we can't even *read*, because the seed packets are in Chinese and Japanese.)

We've also taken a different approach with tomatoes. When we were city consumers, we acquired a deep-seated bias against the commercial tomatoes sold in supermarkets. Once we began farming, we swore we would not grow these varieties. But many of our competitors *do* grow them. As a result, there is a huge unmet demand at farmers markets for varieties with that coveted "old-timey" flavor — even during peak tomato season.

Even though they require very gentle picking and packing, heirloom tomatoes have become a winning item for us. We've tried dozens of the old-timers and have settled on 6 to 10 that do well in our area — including BRANDYWINE, PINEAPPLE and GOLDEN JUBILEE.

Last year, almost as a lark, we decided to grow the ARKANSAS TRAVELER (maybe to be politically correct in the Washington area). Our sign for that one had a picture of Bill Clinton and said "Hail to the Chef." Turned out the ARKANSAS TRAVELER was one of the best-tasting — and best-selling — tomatoes we grew last year.

The heirloom tomatoes were such a hit that we started selling plants so our customers could grow their own. Last year we sold more than 40 varieties — many of which we don't grow in the field.

'SLEEPER' VEGETABLES

Keeping detailed records requires effort. But it's helped us make discoveries that influence our planting decisions. We learned that we gross far more on our "sleeper" vegetables than we do even on tomatoes — and with far less investment in time, space and labor. Some examples:

- Three beds of kale, no more than 4,000 square feet, produced sales of $1,638 last year.
- Two beet patches, maybe 2,000 square feet, brought in $975.
- Two chard plantings of about the same space contributed $1,145.
- Four 60-foot-long rows of parsnips (really an experimental planting) generated about $400.
- About 500 rhubarb plants — easy as

FLOWERS HELP PAY THEIR WAY, EVEN BEFORE WE PICK THEM, BY ATTRACTING BENEFICIAL INSECTS. LAST YEAR WE GROSSED $10,000 FROM LESS THAN 3/4 OF AN ACRE.

pie to-grow — produced nearly $1,000.

We have learned that the huge diversity in our fields is probably our best crop insurance. For us, a tomato crop failure isn't the catastrophe it might be on another farm, because tomatoes account for less than 10 percent of our gross.

The importance of that diversity can be seen when our farmers market stand is stacked to overflowing. The displays are intended to overwhelm customers with choices — different colors, shapes and sizes that we hope will be irresistible. The idea is to beguile with varieties that are available nowhere else — not even in specialty shops.

For example, last year we grew 20 varieties of hot peppers, selling most of them in half-pint boxes for $1. Real heat freaks could buy our "Hot Box" variety pack in a clear plastic deli container for $3.

We grew 15 varieties of sweet peppers, and every imaginable size and shape of eggplant — green, black, purple, violet, white, speckled, tear-drops, rounds, ovals, and long and thins. Our crop mix included four kinds of peas, 12 varieties of potatoes grown on about 2 acres, three kales, five mustards, four beans, two dozen lettuces and so on.

To complete the still-life that we try to paint at each market, we place our prebunched flowers all around the stand. They are our most labor-intensive product. But they also brought in more than $10,000 last year from less than three-quarters of an acre — making them our biggest single sales item. By attracting beneficial insects to our fields, they help pay their way even before we pick them.

Cherry tomatoes are a pain to pick. But our records show they're worth the trouble. Last year, we sold 12 very different varieties, from tiny currant-sized tomatoes to yellow pear-shaped ones. We had customers elbowing each other away from the counter, vying to spend $1.25 a pint. Total take on these tiny tomatoes from markets and restaurants was $4,980 — more than we grossed on standard-sized tomatoes. The choices left some customers bewildered. So we packed quart boxes with a mixture of all the cherry tomato varieties we grew, and sold out every week at $3 a box.

We are constantly searching the catalogs and the literature for more varieties and more information on what might work for us. Because we can only manage so much, we're always ready to drop crops that don't pay their way or satisfy customers. Varieties that don't work — like 80 percent of the flowers that we've tried and found unsuitable for one reason or another — are jettisoned. Varieties that don't meet our taste standard are history. Varieties that bother our customers, like the Japanese turnip that tasted like "piano wire," as one woman put it, are abandoned.

Not without anguish, we have dropped some products from our program because they don't make sense economically or because they are too space-consuming — both in the fields and in the delivery trucks. Ravaging by deer forced us to give up sweet potatoes. We dropped miniature pumpkins when the competition started selling them at fire-sale prices. We gave up standard-size pumpkins because our markets are glutted with them, plus they need a lot more field space than we're willing to devote to them.

Fun Signs Sell

This past winter we blackballed two more items — specialty melons and beans. This really isn't melon-growing country (especially not with organic methods) and we always put far more into the melons than we've gotten back — even with exotic varieties. The expense of hand-harvesting snap beans makes them marginally profitable at best. And there's no way to compete with the guy who harvests his limas by machine and sells the beans fresh-shelled.

Instead, we can sell $250 worth of arugula (a nutty-flavored salad green) per week using a tenth of the field space and a twentieth of the truck space that melons of equal value would require. When you make three 220-mile roundtrips to market each week during the season, giving up on bulk just makes sense.

Another key to marketing is making your product look good. It must be visible and attractive, and you have to teach customers how to use the weird and the unusual. (We supply recipe cards with some less-common items.) We make sure all items are clearly priced and promoted with signs intended to entertain as well as inform. The idea is to make doing business with us fun.

WHAT SEEMS UNIVERSAL IS BEING SENSITIVE TO MARKETING POSSIBILITIES AND TAILORING PRODUCTION TO MEET THEM.

A Flickerville rutabaga sign might say that it's "A favorite of Norwegian Olympians." (Not researched, but a pretty good bet.) The kohlrabi sign might call it "The UFO Vegetable." A sign for healthy-sized heads of pak choi says they can be stir-fried, made into soup, eaten raw or "used as a doorstop."

We dubbed celtis (which we grew only one year) "The Vegetable From Hell." Our sign invited customers to name their own price, because we had no notion what to charge. Around the 4th of July we pack pints of red, white and blue minipotatoes and call them our "Firecracker Special."

The minipotato is an example of how we make lemonade from lemons. We routinely dig most of our potatoes early, catering to customer preference for smaller spuds. But the killer drought of '91 left us golfball-sized potatoes. We started marketing them as "The PeeWee Potato" after reading an article in *Gourmet* magazine about the virtues of teensy taters. The "PeeWee," even at $2 a pint box, became a marketing monster. We can't come close to filling the demand nowadays.

The lemonade theory works in other ways, too. We put 8 to 10 peppers of various colors that are too small to sell individually into the $1 "Bag O' Peppers." They almost always sell out. We sell small (but perfectly good) peppers, tomatoes, onions and garlic bulbs with basil and oregano (com-

From $11/Week To $103,000/Year

WHEN WE STARTED FARMING less than a decade ago, six-figure sales seemed like an ambitious goal. And for good reasons:

In '85, at our very first farmers market in Hagerstown, Md., we took in an astronomical $25. Then things got worse.

The second week, the truck caught fire on the way to the market.

The third week we made $11.

There was probably a message in this. But for reasons that still escape us, we failed to get it. We didn't give up.

In '83, when we were bitten by the urge to farm, we were both reporters at *The Washington Post*. Our work had a big influence on our decision to farm. Ward traveled the country writing about agriculture. Cass reported on environmental and natural-resource issues.

A life in the country was attractive. But some other things became obvious as we went about our reporting. Farmers were in trouble because they were over-leveraged and had no control of their markets. The system discouraged diversity and innovation.

On top of that, synthetic fertilizers and toxic chemicals were making a mess of the environment. The most successful farmers we met seemed to be people who were not afraid to take chances, who refused to rely on conventional marketing and who often had done something else before they got into agriculture.

All of which is to say (notwithstanding our crashing naivete), we figured we could do this and make it work — especially if we avoided the pitfalls of conventional agriculture. We located the right farm, bought it in '83, and immediately drew up a five-year plan. Five years, we calculated with more of that naivete, would be long enough to get the farm to a break-even point if we threw every ounce of our energy into it.

The plan called for doubling gross sales each year, adding an irrigation system, a bare minimum of mechanized equipment, and a greenhouse. We avoided debt whenever possible, allowing our city jobs to help capitalize the operation.

We pursued the five-year plan obsessively. We traveled the 110 miles to the farm each weekend, started going to the Saturday market in Hagerstown in '85 and delivered to an organic wholesaler on our Sunday-night returns to Washington. On Mondays we delivered prepacked bags of garden surplus to colleagues at the newspaper. (That was the beginning of the subscription service that grossed more than $13,000 in '93.)

When it appeared in '88 that the five-year plan was on schedule, Ward left *The Post* and Cass soon followed. Despite some sort of weather calamity each year, sales have climbed steadily. And each year, we've gradually increased the cultivated acreage to allow for more production and to allow different plots to be rested.

In hindsight, maybe six figures wasn't so unrealistic after all.

— W.S. & C.P.

plete with a sauce recipe) as the "Flickerville Spaghetti Kit."

When there's an overabundance of peas, tomatoes or peppers, we market them at a discount in half-peck or peck quantities as "Freezer Pleasers." We've even bagged up Oriental greens and sold them as the "Flickerville Stir-Fry Kit." Convenience packaging, if you will.

Free samples are another way to keep interest high and stimulate sales. We promote virtually every vegetable or fruit that can be eaten raw on sample trays. Our best example is garlic pesto, made from the leaves and flower scapes of garlic plants. (We boldly stole this idea from our friend and fellow grower, Frank Pollock, Saylorsburg, Pa.) Offering pesto samples on snack crackers last year helped us sell $933 worth of garlic tops and leaves — items that most farmers wouldn't think of taking to market.

No. 2 garlic bulbs — sound and unblemished but too small to sell by the piece — sell briskly in half-pint boxes for $1.50. We hold back some small bulbs and plant them in eight-inch pots. When they are fully sprouted, we sell them for $5 as "Garlic-Green Farms" for kitchen use (another idea we lifted from Pollock).

Basil is a high-value item that almost every farm-market vendor offers these days. To beat the competition, we started packing ours in quarter-pound pesto-sized bags. When competitors copied this approach, we upped the ante by including a small garlic bulb, another essential pesto ingredient.

BASIL BRINGS $24/HOUR

Basil gives us the highest return on labor of any crop on the farm — about $24 an hour, according to numbers crunched by University of Maryland economists. That's a market worth protecting. So last year, we put our main basil planting in a new, unheated, 96- by 14-foot hoophouse. Visiting market gardeners thought we were a little loony to use a season-extending hoophouse to grow a summer crop in season. But it paid off in lush harvests that continued well past fall frost. Basil sales were well over $2,800 — enough to pay for two more hoophouses.

We have no copyright or patent on any of these ideas. In fact, most of them aren't very original. As former newspaper people, we are trained to listen to

News From *The Groundhog Report*

A LITTLE DRY WIT and some off-the-wall humor help sell vegetables, Ward Sinclair and Cass Peterson have found. In addition to spending winters dreaming up signs for their market stand offerings (for radishes: "Have a bunch/For your lunch/Take a munch/Taste the crunch/Burma Shave"), the couple produces *The Groundhog Report* — an annual newsletter to help attract (and re-up) subscription customers.

"What you'll receive each week is what is seasonally available on the farm," warns the missive. "Please keep in mind this isn't California (praise the Lord!), so you'll get beans in bean season and peas in pea season and tomatoes when they are by-God ready. And not a day sooner."

In addition to prices and logistics, the newsletter includes hints for making vegetables more palatable (one customer suggests albino squirrel gravy for sweet potatoes), and warnings to buyers to pay their bills on time or suffer the consequences ("Kapowie!").

Sinclair and Peterson also pass along news from the farm, and quotable quotes, such as one from George Bush responding to a reporter's question about why he likes carrot juice: "Because it does not have that stuff they spray on apples," the former president responded. "What stuff, George?" the former newspaper writers retorted with tongues firmly planted in cheeks.

The Spring '92 issue reported on Flickerville Mountain Farm's 15 minutes of fame that came on Groundhog Day that year. Instead of the traditional story about whether or not Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, Associated Press writer Kelly Kissel filed a wire story reporting on Sinclair's decidedly different perspective on groundhogs:

"'I wish people would stop doting on the little (expletive). They do massive damage here,'" Kissel quoted Sinclair.

Groundhog eradication ideas poured in, including a recipe for "Crockpot Groundhog."

"No, we haven't tried it and don't plan to," promised Sinclair and Peterson in *The Groundhog Report*.

— Craig Cramer

RESTAURANT CUSTOMERS ARE FINICKY AND SOMETIMES FICKLE. BUT THEY ARE WILLING TO PAY RETAIL FOR TOP-QUALITY PRODUCE.

other people's ideas and then run with them. We subscribe to scads of food magazines and always read newspaper food pages. (One article led us to mizuna, a Japanese mustard that last year brought in $875.) Our cookbook shelf has quadrupled in size. We visit specialty stores and talk with chefs to keep up with and adjust to cooking trends.

This has helped cement a strong relationship with our restaurant clients, for whom we also custom grow a few hard-to-get specialty items, such as petit pois (shelled baby peas) and black salsify (a root crop also known as oyster plant).

Restaurants are a difficult but rewarding market. They are finicky and sometimes fickle. But upper-scale establishments are willing to pay retail for top-quality produce. (Actually, our retail prices for specialty items are often lower than wholesalers would charge.)

Building a good reputation as a restaurant supplier is worth the trouble. First, chefs talk to each other. Last year, a chef called us to get deliveries after hearing about our produce from another chef. Second, chefs change jobs a lot — every year or so is not uncommon. If they like your produce, they'll take you along to the new restaurant. (One chef even wanted us to airship cherry tomatoes to New York City. We had to decline.)

By visiting the kitchens every week, we get valuable feedback on our produce and the competition's (for good or for bad), and we pick up food-preparation ideas that we can pass on to our retail customers. Some years back, a chef friend introduced us to rapini — an essential in Italian cuisine that's also known as sprouting broccoli. It has been a fall staple at our farmers markets ever since. Conversely, the chefs often visit the farm and always seem to leave with a greater appreciation of the intricacies of raising a seed to fruition.

As we said, there's really nothing novel about what we do. Horticultural books from the last century are chockfull of admonitions to understand your markets and tailor the crop to fit them. One of our favorite authors, Ralph L. Watts, was warning farmers in 1911 that they needed to study and master marketing as zealously as they learned how to farm. In his book, *Vegetable Gardening*, Watts made another point that seems as valid today as it did more than 80 years ago: The cities don't need more vegetables, they just need *better* vegetables.

We've tried to adhere to wisdom of that sort. It's all part of a learning process that gives us hope for this farm's future. But it also tells us we've only begun to understand what we're doing. Keeps farming interesting. ●

Barriers and Opportunities for Direct Marketing in the Philadelphia Region

Farmers' Market Trust
Regional Infrastructure for Sustaining Agriculture

April 1999

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Issues

Agriculture is critical to the economy of the Greater Philadelphia Region, supplying jobs, food, open space, wildlife habitat, and many other benefits. Despite its economic, environmental and social benefits, farming in the region is under significant pressure. Area farmers face strong competition from both domestic and international producers, and have seen their traditional markets erode drastically. Declining profitability threatens the ability of some to survive. The Philadelphia metropolitan area continues to expand outward, and farmers are watching their land become more valuable as real estate than as a source of food or fiber. Indeed, the loss of farmland to subdivisions, malls and office parks is occurring at an alarming pace.

Ironically, many of the region's residents, particularly those living in lower income communities, are seeking greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables because of the departure of supermarkets to the suburbs. Farmers' markets address the needs of both farmers and urban residents by increasing farm income while improving communities' access to fresh produce. However, few farmers have chosen to tap this large potential market. To understand why, the Farmers' Market Trust, with funding from the William Penn Foundation, conducted a study to identify the barriers and opportunities to farmer participation in direct marketing, particularly at farmers' markets in Philadelphia. The study included a mail survey of 153, primarily fruit and vegetable growers in the region, followed by in-depth personal interviews with a sub-sample of the farmer respondents.

The Study Results

Study results show that farmers employ diversified marketing strategies that often include both wholesale and direct marketing outlets. Most are seeking more markets. Less than a third currently participate in farmers' markets. The most frequently reported barrier (59 percent) to participation in Philadelphia markets was lack of information about market locations and how to find out about them. Other barriers identified, particularly by farmers who are not currently selling at markets, were labor and time requirements associated with direct marketing and concerns about safety and distance to market. Regarding these barriers, with the exception of time, less than half of survey respondents reported them to be significant

problems. Further, farmers now participating at farmers' markets also mentioned some of these factors though all indicated they were satisfied with their market experience.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Farmers are seeking more markets. The experience of the Farmers' Market Trust in working to improve communities' access to fresh produce clearly demonstrates that Philadelphia will support farmers' markets. The time has come for a major initiative in the region to expand farmers' markets and create other direct marketing outlets.

We recommend the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture launch a multi-million dollar promotion and marketing initiative to help farmers access new market opportunities. Agriculture is the leading industry in Pennsylvania, yet farmers have difficulty accessing market opportunities. Many states throughout the country have successful promotional campaigns for their agricultural products that generate substantial sales in Pennsylvania. At the same time, some food processors in Pennsylvania are unable to identify local producers.

We also recommend the establishment of direct marketing information centers to help farmers find new markets. There is a need for highly visible places that provide farmers with information about direct marketing opportunities in Philadelphia and other communities. While producer associations, government agencies, educational institutions, marketing entities, brokers, and other formal and informal groups provide information, farmers in this study reported that they still do not have sufficient information about marketing opportunities. Cooperative Extension offices provide a place in which marketing information centers could be placed.

We recommend doubling the funding for the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and expanding the program to include low-income older adults in interested communities throughout Pennsylvania. The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program is an important program in Pennsylvania, helping to meet the nutritional needs of low-income mothers and their children while providing support for Pennsylvania farmers. Pennsylvania has been a leader in supporting the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and recently initiated an innovative demonstration project to expand the program to low-income older adults in the cities of Chester and Sharon.

Finally, we recommend the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture partner with other state departments and local governments to encourage the development of farmers' markets in Pennsylvania communities, and set aside $500,000 to launch farmers' market initiatives in five Pennsylvania municipalities. We further recommend that permits, taxes and many state and local government regulations be waived or relaxed in underserved communities where residents have limited access to fresh, affordable and nutritious produce, to increase access to agricultural products, particularly if the markets are sponsored by charitable agencies. We recommend that a public private partnership lead the effort to develop farmers' markets in many communities, based on the successful experience of the Greenmarkets program in New York City, which generates over $20 million in annual sales to growers.

Facilities for Roadside Markets

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Cooperative Extension NRAES–51

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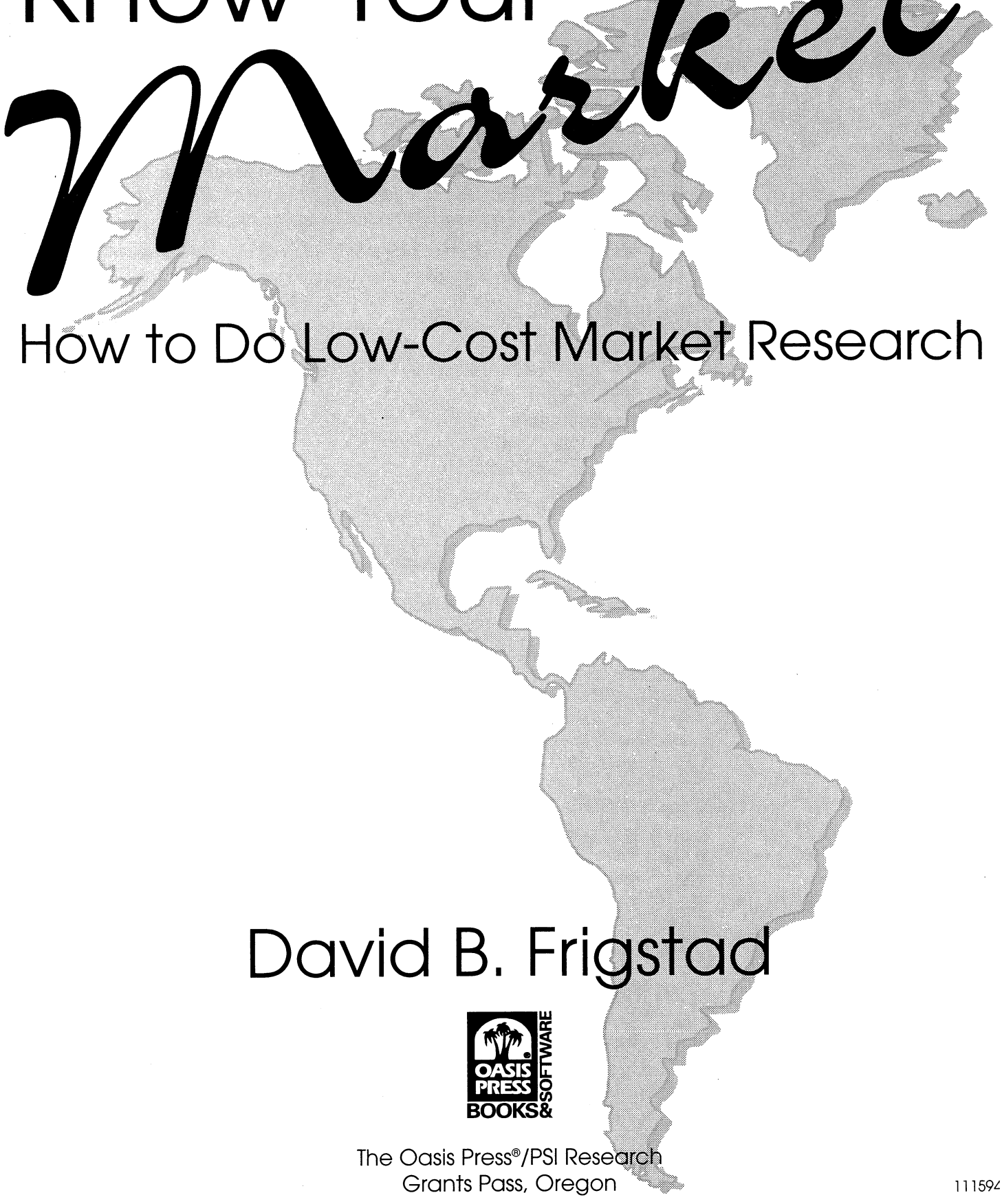

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The Oasis Press®/PSI Research
Grants Pass, Oregon

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This publication is produced through the support and cooperation of the:

Ohio Fruit Growers Society
Ohio Vegetable and Potato Growers Association
Ohio Vegetable and Small Fruit Research and Development Program
Direct Agricultural Marketing Association
North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association
The Ohio State University

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Feb. 10-12, 2000 Ohio Fruit and Vegetable Growers Congress and the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association Conference. This publication contains the highlights and data of some of the presentations made by researchers at the 2000 Congress. This publication also contains summaries of many of the research projects funded by the Ohio Vegetable and Small Fruit Research and Development Program and the Ohio Fruit Growers Society conducted in 1999.

We hope this publication will be a resource for you during the Congress and/or a reference for you in the future.

Enjoy the Congress. We hope this publication and the Congress will enrich you with knowledge and help you improve your operation.

Good Growing in '00!

Rich Eshleman
President - Ohio Fruit Growers Society

Todd Michael
President - Ohio Vegetable & Potato Growers Association

John Graf
Chairman - Ohio Vegetable & Small Fruit

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* Research funded by Ohio growers through the Ohio Vegetable and Small Fruit Research & Development Program

• Research funded by the Ohio Fruit Growers Society

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Ranchers Learn Direct Marketing Techniques from Professional Hustler

by Alice Valenzuela

Editor's Note: This is the second of a three-part update on a cattle-ranching family from the Arizona-Mexico border who were dropped from the social register when they added sheep to their livestock enterprise.

AGUA PRIETA, SONORA, MEXICO: Our early disasters in producing sheep, coupled with the worst drought in our area's recorded history, almost made us throw in the towel during the second year of our fledgling sheep business. Two circumstances made us hang in there.

The first was the inexplicable appearance one morning of a mystery ewe and her lamb. Tinkerbell wandered onto our ranch seemingly from nowhere, and no one has claimed her since she arrived two years ago. She has proven to be a prolific and excellent mother, as have her female progeny. We interpreted Tinkerbell's arrival, at a low point in our sheep odyssey, as an sign that Someone wanted us to be successful.

The second was the steady trickle of visits and phone calls we received from individuals wanting to buy lamb. Our ranch is an hour's journey from a paved road, and we never promoted the fact that we had sheep for sale. But when people learned about it through the grapevine, they sought us out and paid our price for lamb without complaining. This customer initiative encouraged us.

As sheep numbers grew, we reached the point where we had too many lambs to sell via word of mouth, but not enough to justify the expense of advertising them for sale, nor to send a trailer full of lambs to the packing house. A fellow producer in Magdalena, Sonora, a four-hour drive from us, was in the same position. He had taken to loading a truck with his lambs and cull ewes each weekend, and heading to the large border town of Nogales. There, he parked on a street corner and hawked his animals. Business was good, he said, and he suggested Roberto join him.

AN UNLIKELY MENTOR

We received a marketing lesson that would make business guru Peter Drucker envious. Rubén is a Damon Runyonesque character who owns Magdalena's, uh, house of ill repute. We learned this later, after we marveled at his ability to hustle sheep. Accordingly, he believes there is no such thing as an unmarketable animal.

Rubén taught us to sell cull ewes at nearly the same price as prime lamb. He never uses the words "cull" or "old" in referring to his ewes. If they are knock-kneed, sway-backed, and bow-legged, he speaks of them as though they are beauty queens. He informs customers that "mature" ewes are the best for making *birria*, a barbecued meat popular at parties and weddings. One does not spare expense on such special occasions.

Bottle-fed lambs are sold as pets, for nearly as much as a grown-out lamb. We never expected to recoup the cost of the milk replacer these leppies consumed, until we hung out with Rubén. Because he was so enthusiastic about *everything* he had to sell, buyers treated their purchases reverentially, even if they were to be consumed that evening. Instead of tossing their lambs and ewes in the back of their station wagons or in their truck beds, customers usually would drive off with the animal seated between them in the front seat, as if it were a child.

Rubén explained he had decided to raise sheep because it was more lucrative than the World's Oldest Profession. He currently rents a small patch of land outside Magdalena where he raises his sheep feedlot style, buying scavenged stuff like junk hay and wheat hulls, mixing them with molasses, corn and other cheap nutrients. He says he plans to issue pink slips to his ladies when he has saved enough from sheep sales to buy his own ranch. It won't be long now.

OBSTACLES

Rubén, like us, had a problem difficult to overcome. We needed good rams to improve our flocks, and these were virtually unobtainable. Registered animals exist in the south of Mexico, but this region is not certified free of tuberculosis and brucellosis as is our northern state of Sonora. Buying rams requires long and expensive quarantine periods.

Mexicans previously bought seedstock from the USA, but a new Mexican regulation prohibits importing animals from an area that hasn't been certified scrapie-free for at least one year prior to the animals' sale. So purchases from the USA are stalled until American producers comply. This is political retaliation against the USA refusal to let Mexican sheep cross the border to meet the American shortage of lamb and mutton.

The history of such squabbles convinced us that we wouldn't be able to import rams even when Americans did comply with the new regulations. Faced with this dilemma, Roberto solved our problem the Mexican way. We bought two prize rams from Texas. On their way to be delivered to the border town of Douglas, Arizona, he searched for a "coyote," the two-legged kind.

Coyotes are not necessarily the nuisance their four-legged namesakes are. They are, shall we say, entrepreneurs. They fix traffic tickets, get you seats at a sold-out play, and run interference with bureaucrats. They cross undocumented workers into the USA. Roberto figured there were coyotes who could cross rams in the opposite direction.

I was nervous about this arrangement, but Roberto assured me he had it all worked out. We were to meet our coyote on the border at the Wal-Mart parking lot, with our new rams in the back of the pickup. ■

Stay tuned for more.

Roberto and Alice Valenzuela raise sheep, cattle, and chickens in Mexico, about 50 miles from the Arizona border. If you wish to contact them, send a self-addressed and stamped envelope with your questions to: Rancho Mababi; c/o P.O. Box 8; Douglas, AZ 85608.

B. Value Added Marketing

B. VALUE ADDED MARKETING

B. Value-Added Marketing

Alternative Enterprises--Value-added Agriculture
NRCS Information Sheet
Available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise

Analyzing and Developing Marketing Strategies for Tennessee's Value-Added Agriculture: Using Case Studies to Enhance Success
Released by the Federal State Marketing Improvement Program
Available at: http://www.utextension.utk.edu/adc/pdf/fsmipstudy.pdf

Adding Value with Small-Scale Food Processing and Specialty Dairy Products, Resource Packet.
Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University
This publication contains information handed out at the Farming for the Future Leadership conference.
Hardcopies available from:
Department of Rural Sociology
Warren Hall, Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Ph: (607) 255-9832.
Email: gcg4@cornell.edu

Farming for Profit, Stewardship and Community Tip Sheets
SARE
-TIP# 2: Add Value through Marketing
All tip sheets are available online at: http://www.sare.org/tipsheet/index.htm
Hardcopies are available from:
Ph: (301) 405-3186 or 202-720-5203.
Email: vberton@wam.umd.edu

Building Your Brand
VAntAGe Magazine volume 2 number 4
By Nancy Giddens and Amanda Hofmann
November 2001
This publication is an article on value-added marketing
Available at: http://valueadded.missouri.edu/vantage/v2n4/vanews2.htm

Adding Value through Environmental Marketing: Opportunities for Food Producers, Processors and Retailers Conference
Proceedings available online at:
http://www.iatp.org/labels/envcommodities/index.htm

Adding Value for Sustainability: A Guidebook for Cooperative Extension Agents and other Agricultural Professionals
By Kristen Markley and Duncan Hilchey

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)
This publication provides information on management considerations, community support and case study examples of value-added industries. It has a very good list of resources and information on small scale food processing.
Web site: www.pasafarming.org
P.O. Box 419
Millheim, PA 16854
Ph: (814) 349-9856

New Crop Opportunities Center
The New Crop Opportunities Center provides farmers with production and marketing information on new crops and value-added versions of current crops.
Website: http://www.uky.edu/Ag/NewCrops/aboutus.html
N-324 Agricultural Science Center
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40546-0091
Email: newcrops@ca.uky.edu

Developing a Promotional Strategy
Tourism Information Series no. 6
By Maureen H. McDonough and Gary A. Ackert
Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service (September 1986)
Extension Bulletin E-1939
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33710086.html

Creating a Promotional Theme
By Maureen McDonough and Gary Ackert
Michigan State University (1986)
ID: E1957
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33710088.html

Selecting Promotional Media
By Maureen McDonough and Gary Ackert
Michigan State University (1987)
E-2005
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33710093.html

Building Your Brand
By Nancy Giddens and Amanda Hofmann of Missiouri Value Added Development Center. Published in VAntAGe, November 2001.
Available in Resource Manual or website
www.valueadded.missouri.edu/vantage/v2n4/vanews2.htm

What Food Service Operators Need

An article that summarizes the results of a survey of 196 companies which market to the food service industry. It discusses the attributes most important to this sector including freshness and cost per serving.

www.preparedfoods.com/archives/2003/2003_11/1103foodservice.htm

Ph: 402-472-2832

INFORMATION SHEET

USDA NRCS

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

AE-4

Alternative Enterprises – Value-Added Agriculture

Introduction

Farmers and ranchers have been pursuing ways to obtain a larger share of the consumer's dollar especially since the 1990's when the value of farm products declined drastically. This has resulted a tremendous growth in the marketing of value-added agricultural products. The farmer's share of the consumer's dollar decreased from 46% in 1913 to 24% in 1997 and is now at an all time low of 20 percent in 2000. A larger share of the consumer's dollar will result in a higher quality of farm life, more natural resource conservation and sustaining the rural community.

How Can You Use Your Land's Legacy to Benefit the Public and Boost Your Bottom Line?

Many of us don't think of soil, water, animals, plants, and air as resources—they are just there. We use them and don't think too much about conservation of these resources either. Conservation practices enhance the productivity of the natural resources. In many situations, the cost of conservation practices is not recovered under current farm prices and marketing practices. Combining conservation practices with value-added agriculture results in the conservation of the natural resources and environment, increases their productivity, and enhances farmers' and ranchers' bottom lines.

What is Value-Added Agriculture?

Value-added agriculture means getting more income from your farm in innovative ways: (1) growing a commodity for a special market, (2) changing the form of a commodity before it is marketed, (3) changing the way a commodity is packaged for market, (4) changing the way a commodity is marketed, or (5) adding a new enterprise. In many cases, the value-added alternatives can be combined to yield an even higher income to the farmer or rural community.

1. Changing the way a commodity is marketed: You add value when you market a raw agricultural product in a nontraditional way to command a higher price. You might, for example, direct-market your product at a farm stand, to special processors or users, to the local community, to schools or restaurants, or through farmers' markets or other outlets. Commodities that require special production methods or harvesting techniques, that reach specialty markets, or that fill another market niche can be grown under contract for a much higher net return. But you need to seek out these market alternatives or, in some cases, "sell the purchaser" on the concept that a higher value product is being offered for sale because of either the production/ harvesting techniques, or product uniqueness.

2. Changing the form of a commodity before it is marketed: You also add value when you transform raw agricultural products through processing. Costs are incurred during processing; however, the "processing margin" covers the cost plus a margin that yields a higher profit. This also provides you the opportunity to market the product differently—for example, slaughtered and packaged beef that you sell directly to consumers, or whole-hog sausage that you sell to neighbors, friends, local organizations, or restaurants and institutions. Other value-added products include selling flour instead of wheat, or corn meal instead of corn; selling flour directly to the bakery or the consumer; or selling the final product, bread, to the consumer. Selling vegetables and fruits directly to the consumer rather than to wholesalers or processors requires cleaning, packaging, and displaying the commodity. But because you now do the processing, distribution, and packaging, you now have the opportunity to capture 100 percent of the consumer dollar.

3. Changing the way a commodity is packaged for market: Value-added marketing through packaging provides a great opportunity to increase profit. Package design is the first thing the consumer sees; *it is the basis for almost all first-time purchases.* Package size, for example, must meet the consumer's need. If he or she wants to buy a single tomato, one must not sell only by the basket. Consumers are willing to pay the price differential because they do not want to buy more than they need.

Unique, attractive, special occasion, or gift-ready packages provide a competitive edge. A special basket full of apples with a bow or a fall arrangement attached will sell faster and for a higher price to the customer who is looking for a gift. Some other ideas include honey with a bow or attractive label, a jam/jelly box, or special sauces. Packages with decorative and informative labels may also be a reward because they are gift-ready. In today's society of trending towards "ready-to-go," the seller does the thinking about how to add value to a basket of apples, that jar of honey or bunch of grapes, or those jams and jellies. The buyer is ready to pay for that service and more. Farmers have a special marketing opportunity in that many consumers want to connect with the land. In addition, value-added products complement tourism activities by giving visitors a tangible "piece" of place to take back home and share with others.

4. Growing a commodity for a special market: Ethnic- or culture-oriented consumers are the fastest growing value-added markets today. The growth in diversity through immigration has opened up strong ethnic markets in many areas of the country. A viable market exists in every metropolitan area today—not just in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Miami.

The special markets include not only the foods with which recent immigrants grew up, but also organic, pasture-fed production because it meets diverse tastes and dietary needs. Immigrants also have influenced the diets of other Americans to the point that the market can be much larger than the specific immigrant group.

5. Adding a new enterprise: A new enterprise is defined as any change in a product or service. This includes *growing the commodity for a special or niche market.* A change in the production process, for example, might involve switching to organic production practices; it might mean changing corn or soybean varieties to produce a special crop for a special industry such as cosmetics, industrial oils, or textured vegetable protein. A new enterprise or activity might include adding mushroom or herb farming, goat production, or pasture-fed chickens. It could be "agritainment" such as petting zoos, bed-and-breakfast operations, fee hunting and fishing, nature walks, wedding facilities, farm/ranch stays, or picnicking. The most common new enterprise market is the organic consumer. Almost every farmers' market or food fair has several organic growers marketing various products.

Uniqueness is a vital part of selecting value-added enterprises. Most of the literature and successful entrepreneurs note that you need to identify a product that no one else is producing, and that you should establish that your test market wants to purchase what you're selling.
We need to think more broadly about our alternatives and who our customers might be. Such thinking expands the range of possibilities and includes them in a business plan. You may have listed completely different enterprises under alternative 3, *"Changing the way the product is packaged for market,"* alternative 4, *"Growing the commodity for a special market,"* and alternative 5, *"Adding a new enterprise."* Whichever alternatives you select must be driven by marketing opportunities that match your goals. The alternative or product you select must be "market driven" and not just a product you would "like" to produce and sell.

Why develop a value-added enterprise?

Adding value to agricultural production contributes to the economic and environmental sustainability of both farm and community. Adding value to an agricultural product offers farmers the opportunity to receive a bigger share of the consumer's food dollar. (The farmer's share dropped from 46 percent in 1913 to 20 percent in 1998, according to the USDA Economic Research Service. Why? Consumers buy more "ready-to-eat" or "ready-to-cook" food while farmers generally continue to produce and market raw agricultural commodities.) By the year 2005, it is projected that people will be spending an average of only 15 minutes to prepare a meal, half as long as today. These meals are being called "home replacement meals," and value-added enterprises need to be looking at these changing consumption patterns.

Value-added products can open new markets, create recognition and appreciation for the farm, and extend the marketing season. Value-added products can dramatically increase a farmer's income.

Value-added agriculture is very important to any local economic development strategy. Jobs usually are created in the local community which, in turn, support additional jobs, yielding income that is spent locally.

How do value-added enterprises contribute to sustainability?

Sustainability has many aspects. It begins with having your own food supply in your backyard or community. Over the past several decades, the trend has been away from local production. For example, the New England states produced more than 80 percent of their own food supplies at the turn of the 20th century. Now, more than 85 percent is imported into the region.

Value-added agriculture—

- sustains the farm by capturing a larger share of the consumer food dollar through direct marketing,
- creates an enterprise that is a logical extension of the current farm business,
- provides an innovative business strategy that allows small farms to compete with large farms,
- contributes to rural community development by attracting more food consumers and small-scale processing businesses that create new employment opportunities and new markets for high-value agriculture products, and
- invigorates the local economy.

What are some of the keys to success?

Following are some general points identified by Keith Richards and Debra Wechsler, as summarized from interviews of successful value-added entrepreneurs in *Agricultural Technology Transfer for Rural Areas.* These include:

Choose something you love to do. It's hard work under the best of circumstances. If you are doing it just for the money, it's unlikely that the energy, creativity, and satisfaction necessary for success will be adequate.

Follow demand-driven production. Produce what your customers want. Get to know your customers. Keep adjusting your products according to their tastes and purchases.

Create a high-quality product. Quality is the single most important element that will differentiate your product from mass-produced alternatives. More and more, consumers want fresher, better tasting, healthier products than those available from large retailers.

Start small and grow naturally. Invest your ingenuity first, labor second, and money third. If you start small, the effort you invest and the income you generate are more likely to be matched. Let the market dictate your growth.

Make decisions based on good records. Base business decisions on what is, not what you hope or guess the situation to be. Even if everything else is right, poor financial management and decision-making can still kill the business.

Establish a loyal customer base, preferably local. In addition to high quality and meeting customer demand, focus on your niche. Personal contact, exceeding expectations, providing steady supply, and community involvement will help secure a strong base of repeat customers.

Provide more than just food or a product. People are hungry for a connection with the rhythms of the earth and for a sense of community. Provide your customers with an experience of the satisfactions and spiritual rewards of your farm life. Provide them with some fun, peace, and relaxation.

Get the whole family or all the partners involved. Value-added processing takes additional energy and skills. When several family members are involved, each person can contribute his or her unique talents and specialize for efficiency.

Keep informed. It is important to keep informed about your customers, your competition, the laws concerning your business, and other producers.

Plan for the future. To be successful, you have to know where you are headed. Each path requires different courses of action. Set goals for your business and a plan of actions to achieve them.

What are the added risks with value-added agriculture products?

Any activity or enterprise that requires the public to come onto your farm, such as a U-pick enterprise, or around your premises, such as a booth at a farmers' market, also requires additional insurance. Most farm insurance policies will cover this type of enterprise for an additional cost. However, an agritainment activity (such as petting zoos, hay rides, corn maze, and the like) will generally require an additional policy other than the one that covers the farm. Also, value-added processing of fruits, vegetables, or meats increases safety risks and requires an understanding and satisfaction of Federal and state rules and regulations. You need to consider these factors in your business plan as it pertains to business responsibilities and marketing options.

How successful are value-added processing enterprises?

There is no one formula for a successful value-added, small-scale processing enterprise. Nationally, only about 8 percent of the people who start a value-added processing enterprise are successful.

For example, of entrepreneurs who follow the University of Nebraska Food Processing Center phase I and II

programs, over 80 percent remain in the food manufacturing business. However, 80 percent of those who completed the phase I program decided to drop the value-added processing enterprise before taking the phase II program.

Several small business centers located throughout the United States are available to assist farmers and other small entrepreneurs to help them determine what might be successful enterprises for them.

The best way to identify the type of assistance available in your state or a neighboring state is to call the office of the State Extension Director. This office should be able to provide names and telephone numbers of the Small Business Administration Centers, food processing centers, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), consultants, and other organizations that could assist you.

What are the typical value-added start-up management considerations?

Following are five areas identified by Kristen Markley and Duncan Hilchey in the publication "Adding Value for Sustainability." These points are discussed extensively in the publication. Only the management considerations discussed by the authors are presented here.

Quality Products

- Decide to explore a value-added business endeavor after receiving enthusiastic response from friends and from customers when the product was test-marketed at a farmers' market.
- Discuss product development with university food science Extension specialists.
- Subscribe to specialty food journals, purchase books on the topic, search the Internet, and spend time in the reference and periodicals sections of a public library.

Good Marketing and Management

- Develop a business plan, market research plan, and bookkeeping records using a system such as Cornell's Farming Alternatives guide, assistance from the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and SCORE, the county Cooperative Extension office, NxLeveL™, or other economic development agencies.
- Determine the most appropriate market distribution channels (based on market research) such as farmers' markets, restaurants, gourmet food stores, mail-order catalogs, supermarkets, web sites, or wholesalers.
- Research brokers and distributors.
- Attend trade shows, talk with vendors, and research their products and marketing channels.
- Hire a qualified graphic designer to help with labeling, packaging, and sales literature design ideas.
- Use sales literature and sampling demonstrations at local gourmet food shops and farmers' markets to test the product.
- Send out press releases to local newspapers to encourage articles.

Sufficient Capital

- Research co-packers and food processing incubators.
- Research sources of capital.
- Keep capital costs down.

Food Safety

- Research and comply with Federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Contact appropriate local, state, and Federal food safety regulators regarding processing, packaging, and labeling.
- Become familiar with the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) programs through attending industry or university training.

Other Legal Issues

- Determine the business legal structure, and if there is more than one business partner, develop a business partnership agreement.
- Purchase sufficient product liability and other necessary insurance coverage.
- Research registration of trademarks.

Does value-added agriculture increase the role of management?

As one takes on more aspects of marketing and distribution in the value-added enterprise, the need and use of a total business plan becomes more apparent and important. The more aspects there are to a business, the more crucial it is to have a 5-year (long-range) plan, a 1-year plan, and a daily management and business plan. Value-added agriculture and agritainment increase the complexity of a farm operation, especially in many management and production areas with which farmers or other small business people may not be familiar. A business planning process that requires you to contact people experienced in these areas of production and management is needed. This process makes you more likely to include all the steps and requirements for determining the feasibility of your new enterprise.

Business planning processes and workbooks are available through the Small Business Administration, universities, farm management firms, Cooperative Extension Service, and in your local library. "Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises" is a very useful workbook developed by the Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Services. Call 607-255-7654 for more information on this publication.

What are some of the value-added marketing alternatives?

Some of the more common marketing alternatives for agricultural products include:
U-pick operations, farmers' markets, gourmet and specialty shops, health-food stores, local food cooperatives, mail order, restaurants and catering businesses, roadside stands, supermarkets, community-supported agriculture, upscale delis and grocers, and the Web. Processing alternatives of the agricultural products include: prepared meats/poultry (jerky, Bar-B-Q, smoke/seasoned), jellies and jams, pies, cheeses, ice cream, gift baskets, and many others. Finally, agritainment enterprises use natural resources for such activities as hayrides, fee fishing or hunting, bird watching, bed-and-breakfast operations, farm/ranch stays, pumpkin picking, and many others. The NRCS Information Sheet (AE-1) "Alternative Enterprises—For Higher Profits, Healthier Land" lists more than 150 alternative enterprises for ranches, farms, or communities. (Call 1-888-LANDCARE for a copy.)

How does one get started in a value-added enterprise?

- Conduct research at the library or university, or on the Internet.
- Talk to friends, neighbors, farmers/ranchers, Cooperative Extension, RC&D Council, foundations, and other entrepreneurs who run value-added agricultural enterprises.
- Learn the marketing side of value-added agriculture; marketing will make or break a value-added enterprise.
- Visit fairs and trade shows that spotlight value-added enterprises.
- Attend conferences and meetings.
- Contact the Small Business Development Center and the appropriate county, state, and tourism bureaus.
- Start small and simple.
- Identify your product. Is it unique?
- Identify your customer.
- Build a customer base before venturing into the "product processing" phase of value-added enterprise.
- Develop a long-range plan.
- Develop business and marketing plans.
- Join organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary) that serve both your new peer group and your new or prospective customers.
- Join associations and other value-added groups.
- Form partnerships with your neighbors. Work together.

Kim Knorr-Tait, a value-added farmer in Pennsylvania, says, "We are small. We can adapt to market trends. We can be flexible. We do what is needed.... A business has to do what no one else is doing in order to succeed. A key to success is being unique and able to differentiate yourself."

What are some recommended references?

Some of the available references on value-added agriculture are presented below. Those marked with an asterisk are available for a fee. There may be other references available in addition to those listed.

Adding Value for Sustainability: A Guidebook for Cooperative Extension Agents and other Agricultural Professionals, Kristen Markley and Duncan Hilchey, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, PO Box 419, Millheim, PA 16854, Telephone: 814-349-9856. *
Publication on management considerations, community support, case-study examples of value-added industries, and a list of resources and information on small-scale food processing.

Adding Value to Farm Products: An Overview, Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), Telephone: 800-346-9140. Web www.attra.org.
Introduces the concept of value-added farm products, outlines keys for success, and provides resources for additional information.

Small-Scale Food Dehydration: A Resource List (Value-added Technical Note), ATTRA. Telephone: 800-346-9140, Web www.attra.org.
Lists a variety of resources, including Extension and general publications, that describe dehydration processes, equipment, and designs for growers who would like to construct their own dehydrator.

Small-Scale Oilseed Processing (Value-added and Processing Guide), ATTRA, Telephone: 800-346-9140. Web www.attra.org.
Describes the basic processes involved in small-scale oilseed processing. Describes different low-cost techniques and lists of resources for more information.

SoyFoods: Adding Value to Farm Products (Value-added Systems Guide), ATTRA, Telephone: 800-346-9140. Web www.attra.org.
Provides an overview of food products made from soybeans: tofu, miso, natto, soy milk, soy flour, and soy oil. Provides resources for specific information on soyfood production and marketing.

Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers, SARE, USDA, CSREES. Telephone: 202-720-5203. Web www.sare.org/san/htdocs/pubs.
An overview of alternative value-added marketing strategies with a few case studies. Provides insight into value-added agriculture by selling through farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture and new cooperatives, as well as business planning. Contains a list of resources for general information, business planning and management, web site, books, periodicals, and videos.

Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises, Small Farms Series, Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Services, Cornell University, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853. Telephone: 607-255-7654.
A workbook written for families and individuals interested in developing a new farm-based enterprise, including nontraditional enterprises. It contains worksheets to evaluate family goals, alternative enterprises, marketing, production, profitability, financial feasibility, and decisionmaking.

Dynamic Farmers' Marketing: A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products. Jeff Ishee, Bittersweet Farmstead, PO Box 52, Middlebrook, VA 24459. Telephone: 540-886-8477. *
Addresses effective planning and income potential, farmers' market organization, products that sell, the role of quality, and specialty products. Examines relationships and customers in depth.

Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture, Elizabeth Henderson and Robyn Van En, Chelsea Green Publishing, P.O. Box 428, White River Junction, VT 05001. Telephone: 800-639-4099.
Presents information on the goals and focus of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): getting started, getting organized, types of food to grow. Describes the many CSA models, from the community-organized and -operated model to the subscription model, which the farmer organizes and operates. Gives guidelines for planting, harvesting, operations, and organizations.

CSA Farms in the United States 1999-2000: A new partnership between farmers and consumers, USDA, SARE. Telephone: 202-720-5203.
A listing, by state, of farmers and Community Supported Agriculture ventures with addresses, e-mails, and telephone numbers.

Making Your Small Farm Profitable, Ron Macher, publisher of Small Farm Today, Storey Books, Pownal, VT 05261. *
Discusses 25 guiding principles, development of new crops and new markets, and ways to maximize net profit per acre. It suggests planning, management, and 44 enterprise budgets for livestock, poultry, crops, fruits, and vegetables. It also contains a guide on equipment costs, operation costs, and other factors for budgeting purposes.

South Dakota Farm and Ranch Vacation: Resource Directory, South Dakota Department of Tourism, 711 E. Wells Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501, FAX: 605-773-3256.
A checklist and presentation of the steps one needs to follow when considering agritourism or other value-added enterprises. The focus is on South Dakota, but the steps are applicable anywhere.

Backyard Market Gardening: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Selling What You Grow, Andrew W. Lee, Good Earth Publications, 1720 Mountain View Road, Buena Vista, VA 24416. Telephone: 540-261-8775. *
The author, with more than 30 years' experience as a market gardener, home builder, small business owner, and international speaker, discusses how you can earn $36,000 per acre from your backyard. Covers garden siting, preparation, tools needed, marketing, new ideas, business planning, production management, and eco-farming.

Small Farm Today: The Original How-to Magazine of Alternative and Traditional Crops, Livestock, and Direct Marketing, Telephone: 800-633-2535.
Founded for and dedicated to the preservation and promotion of small farming, rural living, sustainability, community, and "agripreneurship." The October/November/December 1999 issue included feature articles on greenhouses, turkeys, hogs, miniature Herefords, herbs, dry beans, oxen, and market gardening plus 24 other articles.

Small Farm Digest, USDA, CSREES, Small Farm Program. Telephone: 202-401-6544.
Articles on USDA activities, small-farm success stories, small-farm studies, and calendar of events.

You Can Farm: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Start and $ucceed in a Farming Enterprise, Joel Salatin, Good Earth Publications. Telephone: 800-499-3201.
A basic book for people interested in becoming farmers. Contains a substantial amount of information on production, management, marketing, and planning for a small-farm operation that direct-markets pasture-fed chickens, beef, and vegetables. Production methods minimize cost of materials and other inputs.

Agritourism in New York State: Opportunities and Challenges in Farm-Based Recreation and Hospitality, Duncan Hilchey, Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University. Telephone: 607-255-9832.
A detailed examination of farm-based tourism enterprises. Five case studies are reported as well as management considerations/skills, potential demand, and a sample agritourism farm activity and budget.

Developing New Markets to Support Local Agriculture: Tapping New Markets, Creating a Regional Product Identity and Promoting Local Wholesaling, Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University. Telephone: 607-255-9832.
Contains a complete listing of resource material available through the Alternative Farming Programs.

Adding Value: With Small-Scale Food Process and Specialty Dairy Products, Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University. Telephone: 607-255-9832.
A handout from the "Farming for the Future Leadership Training Workshop."

Income Opportunities for the Private Landowner through Management of Natural Resources and Recreational Access: Proceedings from the Conference, West Virginia University Extension Service, Morgantown, WV.
Proceedings of a 3-day conference held in 1989. Includes more than 407 pages containing 55 articles. A number of these articles are published as separate publications. Contact James Maetzold, 202-720-0132 or jim.maetzold@usda.gov, for a copy of the table of contents to determine articles of interest.

Farmers Direct Marketing Program, USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service. Telephone Errol Bragg 202-720-8317. Web www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing.
Focuses on direct marketing through farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture ventures.

Tilling the Soil of Opportunity: NxLeveL™ Guide for Agricultural Entrepreneurs, University of Nebraska, US WEST Foundation and SARE. Call 1-800-873-9378 or 1-800-328-2851 to find out where the next course will be held in your area.
Training course developed by more than 15 business writers, producers, and consultants involved in successful direct marketing agricultural businesses. Covers assessing your resources, business planning and research, marketing, business management, legal considerations, budgets, and financial management. The course goal is "helping producers reach the next level of success."

Entrepreneurial Training Program, USDA, CSREES. Telephone: Randy Williams 202-720-0743.
New program designed to train agricultural entrepreneurs and other rural small business owners in the planning, management, and operation of a small business.

AgVentures, published bimonthly. Telephone: 888-474-6397. *
Publishes articles on livestock, crops, aquaculture, niche markets, wildlife, herbs, and other topics. The articles are based on actual alternative enterprise success stories.

Resources are identified at the end of each article.
For additional copies of this information sheet, AE-4, call 1-888-LANDCARE or see the web site at http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RESS/econ/ressd.htm for more information.

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Farming for Profit, Stewardship & Community

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FARMERS MARKET DIRECTORY

USDA's 1999 National Farmers Market Directory lists hundreds of farmers markets across the country, a 10-percent increase in the number of markets since 1996.

How to order: Free from USDA's Agricultural Marketing service. Call Denny Johnson, (202) 690-0531; http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm

ADDING VALUE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

This guidebook for producers, processors and community leaders interested in adding value to farm products offers practical information on food safety, financing, marketing and community support strategies for small-scale processors. Created by the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Cornell University's Farming Alternatives Program, with support from USDA-SARE.

How to order: $8.50 + $3 s/h to "Cornell University," Farming Alternatives Program, 17 Warren Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; (607) 255-9832

SELL WHAT YOU SOW! THE GROWER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL PRODUCE MARKETING

This 304-page book by author Eric Gibson specifies strategies from master marketers around the country. Features information about direct-to-consumer marketing, retail outlets, specialty foods, wholesale, promotion and business management.

How to order: $22.50 + $3 s/h to New World Publishing, 3085 Sheridan St., Placerville, CA 95667; (916) 622-2248

ATTRA'S MARKETING & BUSINESS SERIES

Farmer-ready publications on Community Supported Agriculture; Direct Marketing; Marketing Channels: Pick-Your-Own & Agri-Entertainment; Organic Certification; Resources for Organic Marketing; and Alternative Beef Marketing.

How to order: Free from ATTRA, 800-346-9140; http://www.attra.org

The tools listed here can help you apply this tip to improve your farm or ranch. See the "How to order" section under each reference to obtain your free or low-cost copy. This partial list was compiled by USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program in March 1999. Other resources not listed may also be suitable. See the "Education" link at http://www.sare.org for a complete set of tip sheets.

RESOURCE PACKET:
ADDING VALUE WITH SMALL-SCALE FOOD PROCESSING AND SPECIALTY DAIRY PRODUCTS

- Fostering Locally-Owned Food Processing Businesses
- Specialty Dairy Opportunities

Farming Alternatives Program
Department of Rural Sociology
Cornell University

Sponsored in part by:
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Community Agriculture Development Series

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VAntAGe
Volume 2, Number 4
Article 2 of 6
November 2001

Building Your Brand

Nancy Giddens and Amanda Hofmann

Value added products need a distinct identity - they need a brand. This article is the first of a five-part series and will examine what branding is, why it is important, and the necessary steps to brand your new product. Next month, we will discuss flanker branding.

What is Branding?

Branding is one of the most important factors influencing an item's success or failure in today's marketplace. A brand is the combination of name, words, symbols or design that identifies the product and its company and differentiates it from competition.

Businesses use branding to market a new product, protect market position, broaden product offerings, and enter a new product category. Four types of branding are:

- **New Product Branding:** creating a new name for a new product in a category completely new to the company. Example: A Taste of the Kingdom jellies.
- **Flanker Branding:** protect market position by marketing another brand in a category in which the firm already has a presence. Example: HORMEL® chili and its flanker brand, STAGG® chili.
- **Brand Line Extension:** use of the company's brand name in the firm's present product category. Example: PepsiCo's Pepsi and Diet Pepsi.
- **Brand Leveraging (Franchise Extension):** use of the existing brand name to enter a new product category is called leveraging. Example: Mr. Coffee (a coffee maker) and Mr. Coffee coffee.

Why is it Important to Develop a Brand for Your Product?

A brand offers instant product recognition and identification. Consumers identify branded products and, as a result of effective advertising, have confidence in product quality. Retailers like branded products because they make the store profitable - ***shoppers attracted to branded products spend three to four times more on groceries than do private-label shoppers.***

Branding is beneficial for four reasons:

- **Differentiation:** A brand provides a clear and definitive reason for customers to buy your product. If this reason does not exist, your product is a commodity and the only measure of value is price. Small, value added businesses cannot compete on price successfully and need to incorporate some form of differentiation.

- **Conveys value:** Consumers perceive brand-name products as higher quality, more reliable and a better value than non-branded products. ***Generally speaking, the number-one brand in a category can command a 10% price premium over the number-two brand, and a 40% premium over the store brand.*** This price premium is known as a brand tax. Consumers understand that a strong brand can reduce getting stuck with disappointing or faulty products.
- **Builds Brand Loyalty:** Brand loyalty is the recurring stream of profit generated by repeat and referral sales of a specific brand. ***Repeat sales can be as much as 90% less expensive to a company than new customer development.***
- **Builds Pride:** Branded, recognizable products invoke a sense of pride in those associated with production, promotion, sale and distribution of those products.

What is the Process of Branding a Product?

A brand must be clear, specific, and unique to your product. For example, the Wheaties brand differentiates the cereal from its competition due to its association with health and "sports excellence." To achieve the same successes with your products, you need to execute four main steps to establish an effective brand:

1. ***Choose an appropriate name that is easily remembered and specific to the product.*** The name should be restricted to three words or less - anything longer is difficult for customers to recall. This process may require legal screening to guarantee availability of the name and customer input to assess attractiveness and appropriateness of the name.
2. ***Develop a slogan.*** The selected slogan needs to be two to three words, catchy, and easily remembered. To generate slogan ideas, you must stay focused on the buyer. Why should they buy the product? What will they like about the brand? How does competition compare? The slogan should take into account answers to these questions.
3. ***Create an appropriate symbol or logo.*** It can be as simple as a geometric shape or as elaborate as a silhouette of a person or object.
4. ***Use the name, slogan and symbol on every piece of correspondence related to the product*** - e-mails, invoices, letterhead, business cards, advertisements and promotions, etc. This system will eliminate inefficiencies in creative and production fees and extend the branding process throughout everything you do. In a sense, it will prevent "recreating the wheel" with each new media effort.

What are the Challenges of Building a Brand?

The greatest challenge faced when developing and building a brand is creating just the right name, slogan and symbol for the product. It will take a great deal of time and consideration! A thorough thought process and feedback from others will help to get past this obstacle.

It is often difficult to achieve initial customer recognition of a new product, regardless of branding. However, branded items are more recognizable and memorable. Effective advertising before and after the sale is key to overcoming this obstacle. Advertising and promotion before the sale are essential to obtain first purchases and follow-up advertisements after the sale will promote customer satisfaction and repeat purchases.

Repeat purchases are one of the primary objectives in brand development. Repeat purchases

are critical to your businesses long- term success and contribute to brand loyalty, which will be discussed in the final article of this series.

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Approaching Foodservice Establishments With Locally Grown Products

PREPARED FOR:

THE NORTH CENTRAL INITIATIVE FOR SMALL FARM PROFITABILITY

A USDA—FUNDED PROJECT

PREPARED BY:

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JUNE 2003

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the initial findings of a survey of members of the Chefs Collaborative organization. The Chefs Collaborative is a national network of more than 1,000 members of the food community who promote sustainable cuisine by celebrating the joys of local, seasonal and artisanal ingredients[1]. Many of the Chefs Collaborative members have significant expertise in purchasing locally grown food products. The purpose of this research and the following report is to 1) use the expertise gained by members of the Chefs Collaborative organization in order to help producers market their products to the foodservice industry and 2) to examine the opportunities and obstacles producers may encounter when approaching a restaurant or institution with locally grown products.

The survey was targeted to Chefs Collaborative members who have the greatest buying authority for the foodservice establishment. Ninety-one percent of the foodservice establishments surveyed were independently owned restaurants, while 8% were chain restaurants. Nearly half (49%) of the establishments surveyed were upscale full-service restaurants with 75% of the respondents holding the position of Chef at the establishment. The following conclusions illustrate how producers can use the research findings in this report when marketing their products to restaurants and institutions.

1. Purchasing locally grown food products *can* be profitable for foodservice establishments.
   Seventy-three percent of the foodservice establishments agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "purchasing locally grown food has a positive impact on my foodservice establishment's bottom line profits." A producer can use this information to show that, based on a survey of a particular group of foodservice establishments, purchasing locally grown products can be profitable.

2. Chef Collaborative members prefer to purchase direct from a farmer.
   When given several alternatives from which to purchase products for their establishment, 57% of the respondents would prefer to purchase direct from a farmer by either receiving direct shipments from the farm or by picking up their products at the farm.

3. Awareness of the attributes that foodservice establishments take into consideration when making food purchases will increase a producer's likelihood of success.
   The attributes that foodservice establishments ranked as very to extremely important when making a purchasing decision were a product's quality, a product's taste, the knowledge of how a product is raised or grown, a product's freshness, the ability to guarantee consistent quality, strict adherence to food safety, a thorough knowledge of the producer's product and its uses, and the ability to deliver the quantity needed by the establishment. Producers must address these attributes when marketing their products to foodservice establishments.

4. The Chefs Collaborative members identified specific reasons for purchasing locally grown food and the factors that motivate them to continue to purchase from local farmers and ranchers. Producers should use this data when approaching a foodservice establishment to make a sale.
   Based upon their establishment's experiences with locally grown or produced food products, the Chefs Collaborative members' reasons for initially purchasing locally grown products and for continuing

[1] http://www.chefscollaborative.org/

to purchase local include:

- Locally grown foods have higher or better quality.
- Locally grown products are fresher.
- Positive relationships have developed with producers.
- Customer requests have been received for locally grown products, especially after carrying local foods for a period of time.
- The availability of unique or specialty products.

5. Obstacles to purchasing locally grown food were identified by Chefs Collaborative Members.
While it is important to be aware of the advantages of purchasing locally grown food in order to help sell local products to foodservice establishments, producers need to be able to anticipate the obstacles that can and will be raised when marketing their products. Again, this group of establishments has a mission or belief that many foodservice establishments do not have. It is very important to take note of the obstacles that they see. A producer should anticipate potential obstacles before his or her first sales call on a restaurant or institution and know how to counter that obstacle. The most significant obstacles identified by the respondents include:

   A. Distribution and Delivery—getting the right product in the right quantity to the right place at the right time.
      - Consistent availability
      - Reliable supply
      - Availability and knowing what locally grown products are available in their area
      - Complicated ordering
      - Too many purveyors (establishments want fewer invoices to pay)

   B. Competitive Or Pricing Comparable To Other Purveyors

   Only 11% mentioned seasonality as an obstacle. One interpretation of this data could be that some of the establishments in the sample are featuring locally grown foods only when they are in season by featuring these products on a "seasonal menu". This promotional technique may influence their customers to frequent the restaurant while these items are "in season".

6. Chefs Collaborative members have promoted the use of locally grown food.
Ninety percent of the foodservice establishments surveyed promote the use of locally grown food on their menu or in their promotional material at one time or another, and 49% of those who had promoted consider the promotion to be very effective.

7. Foodservice establishments need to be able to easily source and purchase locally grown products.
As indicated above, members of the Chefs Collaborative cited product availability and/or knowing what locally grown products are available in their area as a product sourcing and purchasing challenge. In fact, four out of the five top ranked obstacles (see section 2.6) have to do with the ordering and delivery of products. In addition, 38% stated that they would increase locally grown purchases if a greater quantity or variety local products were available and one-third would increase their locally grown purchases if a larger variety of local products were available. Consequently, availability and delivery are *major* issues in increasing the amount of locally grown products purchased by foodservice (and most likely retail) establishments. These establishments

also need to be able to easily source the local products available in their area. This awareness will lead to more locally grown products purchased.

The data suggests that there is a real need for a clearinghouse or database of locally grown products to provide simple and easy access for interested foodservice (or retail) personnel. These clearinghouses will also help a restaurant or institution find backup sources for products they are buying when their current purveyor's supply is limited.

Although quantitative information is presented in this report, the data is projectable only to the members of the Chefs Collaborative organization with buying authority and is **not** projectable to the population as a whole. Producers should use the findings of this report when developing their marketing plan for product introductions and marketing products to foodservice buyers and as a guide to approaching independent restaurants and institutions with their product line.

The report begins with the results of an assessment of attributes and how the respondents rank the importance of these attributes when selecting the brands or products they purchase. The report then turns its focus to the foodservice establishment's experience in purchasing local products, including where and why they have purchased local ingredients, as well as the obstacles they have faced. The report also discusses how the establishments promote the use of locally grown food. Finally, the report identifies the locally grown products that have the greatest foodservice market potential.

C. Farmer's Market

C. FARMERS' MARKETS

C. Farmers' Markets

National Directory of Farmers' Market and Direct Marketing Associations 2001
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service; April 2001
Available online at: http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/

Creating Successful Farmers Markets pg. 25-26
ACRES USA Special Edition
By Barbara Berst

What do I need for...Getting Started at a Farmer's Market?
This is a two-page publication on how to get organized, set up your display area, and what the equipment needs are for getting started at a farmer's market.
Reproduce as needed.

Farmers' Markets and Community Development
Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University
This publication is based on a study of farmers' market vendors and host communities that measured the economic and social impact on farmers and communities.
Available by calling: (607) 255-9832.

20 Tips to Increase Sales at Farmers' Markets and Roadside Stands
A one-page list of tips and resources.
Available from Future Harvest-CASA at
www.futureharvestcasa.org
Future Harvest-CASA
106 Market Court
Stevensville, MD 21666
Ph: 410-604-2681

Dynamic Farmers' Marketing: A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products
By Jeff W. Ishee
Bittersweet Farmstead (July 1997)
ISBN: 096568900X
This book addresses effective planning and income potential. It provides information on farmers' market organization, products that sell, role of quality, and specialty products, and being successful at selling your products. This book is available from the publisher as well as from other common booksellers.

National Directory of Farmers Markets 2000
This publication lists the known farmers markets by state, location, contact and phone number. Available online at http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm
To order a hardcopy, call (202) 690-0531

AMS Farmer's Markets website
This website provides general facts about farmer's markets and additional resources related to farmers' markets. The website also contains a search option for the National Directory of Farmer's Markets.
http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/

The New Farmers' Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Mangers and Communities
By Vance Corum, Marcie Rosenzweig, and Eric Gibson. See Chapter VIII for table of contents.
Published by New World Publishing
For more information, go to:
http://www.nwpub.net/nfm.html
Cost: $24.95 (plus shipping and handling)
Email: sanpubs@uvm.edu
Ph: (802) 656-0484

Farmer's Markets
Prepared by Radhika Bala, ATTRA Technical Specialist
Five-page paper on farmer market development and list of resources. More information available at
www.attra.org/attra-pub/dirmkt.html

Farmers' Markets and Rural Economic Development
By Duncan Hilchey, Thomas Lyson and Gilbert Gillespie
Alternatives Farming Program, Cornell University
Results of a study of farmers' market vendors in the Northeast the effect on the community.
Available by calling 607-255-9252

Making Farmers' Market Sell
By Karl F. Schaefer
Discusses the success of the 20 year old Carrboro Farmers' Market available in Resource Manual. Copy of bylaws available by writing
Carrborro Farmers' Market, Inc
2101 Brookhollow road
Efland, NC 27243
Ph: 919-732-6223

Rules of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Farmers' Market
Available in Resource Manual

Getting a Farmers' Market Started
By Ellie MacDoughall, published in Maine Organic Farmer& Gardner, March/April, 1993
Available in Resource Manual

Do's and Don't's of a Successful Farmers' Market
By Sara Pollard, Rural Mountain Producers Exchange, Inc.
Six-page paper discusses organization and operation of the market.
Available in the Resource Manual.
Rural Mountain Producers Exchange, Inc.
PO Box 3076
Fayetteville, AR 72702

Open a City Farmers' Market
By Lisa Heacox published in the American Vegetable Grower, June 1994.\
Available in Resource Manual

Farmers' Markets: Rules, Regulations, and Opportunities
By Neil Hamilton
The study examines the structure and operation of farmers' markets in the US. Available online at:
www.nationalaglawcenter.org/publications/index/html

United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service

Transportation and Marketing Programs

Wholesale and Alternative Markets

Miscellaneous Publication 1571

April 2001

National Directory of Farmers Market and Direct Marketing Associations 2001

Executive Summary

The United States has 41 local, State, regional, and national farmers market and direct marketing associations. These associations are a valuable resource for farm direct marketers as they offer many benefits and services such as member and consumer directories, conferences, workshops, tours, newsletters, certification, insurance, and government relations.

The Wholesale and Alternative Markets program of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has worked in cooperation with the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association to conduct a national survey of farmers market and direct marketing associations and produce the directory. The objective of publishing a national directory of farmers market and direct marketing associations is to make the resources these associations offer direct marketers, consumers, and agricultural professionals more readily accessible. Many producers may not be aware of the benefits of joining an association. And, associations can benefit from knowing what services other associations provide.

Each association's contact information, organizational structure, and benefits and services are listed in the directory (Alphabetical Listing of Associations) as well as information about which geographical area a particular association covers. Two sections, Associations Listed by Services Offered and Associations Listed by State, allow users to undertake a more targeted search.

Only associations whose *primary* purpose is to improve and facilitate direct marketing are included in the directory. For the purpose of the directory, direct marketing channels are defined as farmers markets, roadside stands/farm markets, Community Supported Agriculture, and pick-your-own operations. There are many other producer, sustainable agriculture, and organic organizations that offer direct marketing resources as a *component* of their work. Some of these associations are included (alphabetically) in the appendix.[1]

Approximately half of the farmers market and direct marketing associations that participated in the survey are nonprofit 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) groups, and about two-thirds have paid staff. Most of these associations collect dues from their members, and about one-third offer membership for consumers. One direct marketing organization traces its roots back to 1956, while many groups were formed during the 1990s when farmer direct marketing experienced a resurgence in popularity.

The *National Farmers Market and Direct Marketing Association Directory 2001* will be maintained on the AMS Farmer Direct Marketing Web site at http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing. Associations that would like to be included in future editions of the directory should contact Claire Klotz at (202) 690-4077 or via e-mail at claire.klotz@usda.gov.

[1] The associations listed in the appendix are not cross-listed elsewhere in the directory.

Creating Successful Farmers Markets

by Barbara Berst

Good news for eco-farmers: Outgoing Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced at the end of his tenure that a record number of farmers markets were operating in the United States. In fact, they've increased 63 percent since 1994. In California's Certified Farmers Market program alone, what started as little more than a handful has now blossomed into more than 350 communities with Certified Farmers Markets, and the number is growing every year.

In the '80s, many cities established farmers markets as a way to bring life back to the center of town, and it worked. Society is acknowledging the benefits as markets produce a strong sense of community identity, bringing together the urban and rural segments of the population. This rare meeting of farmers and non-farming citizens serves to educate, as customers learn about their food sources, gather and swap nutritional information, and enjoy intergenerational experiences while becoming aware of agricultural issues. And farmers, of course, benefit from smaller markets as a way to sell direct, with no middlemen, get instant customer feedback, and sell produce too delicate or specialized for wholesale packing and shipping. Large producers can profit side-by-side with small- and part-time growers, allowing larger farms to offer the more familiar staples in quantity, while smaller farms fill in the gaps with the more unusual and new introductions. Farmers markets are flexible. They work well in small local communities overseen by volunteers and backyard growers, or where organic production is highly concentrated. In California, the largest 7 percent of organic farms claimed three-fourths of the total gross sales, while half of the farms were smaller than five acres, with annual sales of under $7,500.

This growth in farmers markets has created much positive movement forward for eco-farms of all sizes. Steve Violette of Lunenburg, Massachusetts, was able to continue a three-generation family farming operation by skillfully selling at five different farmers markets. The methods the markets employ to succeed are also expanding. Below are some of the ways farmers markets across the country create environments that draw more customers and keep them coming.

SIGNS WITH PRICES

Customers are shy about asking a price and will sometimes move on rather than take a risk. Vendors with clear signs that give name, price, as well as a little bit of a description, create a more customer-friendly atmosphere.

SHALLOW DISPLAYS VERSUS DEEP DISPLAYS

This tip comes from Linda Chapman of Harvest Moon Farm in Spencer, Indiana. When displays are shallow and parallel to the main walking path, customers can see what's available. This way they don't have to walk into narrow aisles off their path.

FREEBIES FOR CHILDREN

Handing out free cherry tomatoes or surplus bachelor buttons helps children (and therefore their parents) enjoy the market, as well as keep young hands off the salable merchandise.

FRIENDLY FARMERS

Farmers markets allow non-farmers to meet with those who grow their food. Though buying fresh-picked produce is the number-one reason people shop the farmers markets, positive human contact is another staple humans need plenty of. Tony Manetta, director of Greenmarket in New York, feels the actual farmers are one of the biggest draws for the market, and that sales always increase when the farmers — rather than their employees — are present at the market. Friendly contact with farmers can make the difference between a customer stopping off at the supermarket or returning next Saturday for field-fresh lettuce. If vendors don't like people, they need to find another outlet to sell through. One rude vendor can cast a dark cloud over an entire market. These gathering places are considered one of the greatest public relations programs for agriculture.

DIVERSIFY

Many choices among vendors will bring a greater number of customers with different needs to the market. Unusual items, new introductions, along with familiar staples that customers can count on, make a very good mix. A regular supply of organic, vine-ripened tomatoes and ongoing supplies of lettuce and greens complement such hard-to-find products as fresh trout and just-picked gourmet mushrooms.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The rise in farmers markets has paralleled the growth in health consciousness at the turn of the century. Farmers markets are a good place for posters or brochures describing the methods and benefits of organic farming. This educates consumers and adds to the appeal of being at the market, reminding citizens that they are contributing to the greater good by shopping there.

PRODUCT NETWORKING AMONG VENDORS/FARMERS

The University of California Small Farm Center created holiday gift baskets which included products from 15 farms and a brochure describing the farms. Participating farmers were thrilled with the success, and all of the baskets sold. Such products create a further sense of cooperation and unity, create another outlet for farmers' products, and promote the farmers and their market at the same time.

PROMOTIONAL EXTRAS

Free promotion through a well-timed press release can be invaluable. So is word-of-mouth promotion that's created when customers leave the market with a sense of goodwill. If the market is small, informal, and utilizes volunteers, one successful method is to have each vendor choose a month and volunteer an "extra," such as writing a press release, organizing a cooking demonstration, or printing up recipe cards that include items from each vendor. If the market is larger and can hire a director, more elaborate projects such as a farmers market exclusive cookbook or ongoing contact with the local press can turn a quiet market into the place to be on Saturday.

MARKET EVENTS

Special events, especially those put on in conjunction with the harvest of local produce or locally celebrated holidays, will attract more customers and more media attention. Here is a list of some successful events put on by farmers markets around the North America:

• **Grand Opening** — An opening day event, if the market is not year-round, is very important. In Bellingham, Washington, a bagpipe band marches around the grounds, the mayor of Bellingham does the "cabbage toss," and freshly cut tulips (a signature of nearby Skagit Valley farmers) mark the event.

• **Mothers' Day** — Vendors are encouraged to create Mothers' Day specials of flowers, garden gifts, hanging baskets, and crafts.

• **Strawberry (or other berry) Festival,** with special booths for shortcake.

• **Local Entertainment** — Scheduling local entertainment will attract more customers, including the musicians' own families. The Davis, California, market regularly schedules local youth talent, such as the Suzuki strings group, local school bands and the civic choir.

• **Pancake Breakfast** — In the small town market of St. Mary's in Ontario, the vendors and board put on a pancake breakfast each month to encourage regulars to return and to attract new customers. The breakfast is made special by using homemade pancake batter, real maple syrup, and fruit that is in season.

• **Chalk Art/Kids' Day** — In conjunction with a local arts association, Bellingham, Washington's, farmers market hands out awards for the sidewalk chalk art produced by local citizens and allows local kids to rent space to sell their wares.

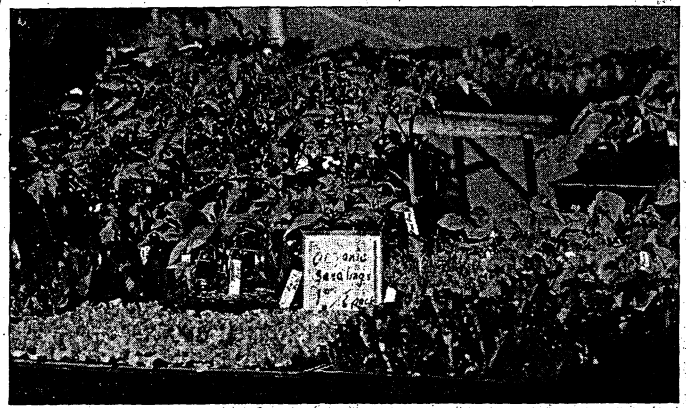
• **Salmon/Corn Festival** — A very popular salmon barbecue cooked and served by market vendors is put on by a maritime farmers market.

• **August Peak Season** — Markets that offer this find creative ways to sell surplus, whether it's with canning demonstrations or free salsa recipes.

• **Harvest Festival** — Popular at markets across the country, customers are drawn to pumpkin-carving demonstrations, most creative scarecrow contests, fresh-pressed apple cider, a large assortment of ornamental gourds, and multi-colored corn and pumpkins that local farmers have been aiming to harvest for this day. One market has expert pumpkin carvers available to carve customers' pumpkins for a donation, which is given to a local women's shelter.

• **November Food Drive** — Canned foods are collected at the market by volunteers for local food banks, creating a sense of community spirit and goodwill.

• **Closing** — A last market day of the season can be enhanced by emphasizing winter storage supplies of squash, honey, preserves and Christmas gifts.



A colorful variety of the more familiar wares, such as tomatoes and green lettuce, mixed with new introductions like colored lettuce, helps draw customers to this

CUSTOMER VISITING AREAS

Places where a few tables and chairs are set aside for informal community gathering can turn a farmers market into the town watering hole. Again, human contact is another sort of sustenance that humans need in our fragmented society.

FAIR FEES

Fees for vendors at markets vary greatly, depending partly on the size of the market and the number of people drawn to it on a regular basis. But some market directors feel that the percentage fee is the fairest, as well as the best for the overall health of the market. As long as the percentage is fair and there is perhaps a minimum fee (to keep extra garden produce from being dumped at cheap prices next to the serious growers) the percentage system can create a wider variety of produce. This helps assure the diversity necessary mentioned above. The larger producers provide familiar staples, and the smaller growers can participate with unusual specialties without paying as high a price.

What do I need for . . . Getting Started at a Farmers' Market?

So you've decided to try selling at a farmers' market. The gardens are weeded, the harvest is starting, and it's time to sell. What equipment and techniques will you need to help sell your produce?

Car, Pickup, Van or Truck

Is your vehicle large enough? This is a major consideration, for not only will you have your produce and the containers you intend to display it in, but you'll also need tables or some kind of structure to keep your displayed food off the ground. Don't forget that you'll need room to transport a sign with your name and farm location, and maybe a chair to sit in. Practice packing before you actually are about to head out to market.

Display

How will you be displaying your produce? Some people use leftover boxes from the local supermarkets; these may not hold up well in damp conditions and don't look especially attractive to potential customers. Used *wooden* boxes such as apple crates can be painted or left unfinished to make an attractive display. Baskets can be purchased in bushel, half-bushel, peck and half-peck sizes. Unpainted wood stays wet and cool longer when watered than painted wood or plastic. Remember to bring all sizes of baskets and containers, as this helps keep your display looking full. Display containers should blend well with and enhance your produce's appearance, not steal attention from it. Browns, brick reds, dark greens, dark blues and natural wood colors will contrast well with the many different colors of produce in your display.

Physical characteristics of your farmers' market display are vital to the success of your effort. *All* displays should have the following common features:

@ - A distinct sign with your name or the name of your farm.
@ - All items should be clearly visible and easy to reach.
@- *Everything* must have the price clearly marked.

Protect your Produce

Choose containers that protect tender produce from drying wind and sun. A spray mister bottle is the best way to keep your produce moist and fresh; bring plenty of cool, fresh water. Once wilted, your produce won't come back. Lettuce and radish tops wilt fast. Too long in the sun, and beans no longer snap when bent. Cukes and zucchini will eventually soften in direct sun. Raspberries should be kept in a cooler with a thick layer of ice on the bottom.

Tip your baskets and containers slightly so that it appears produce is so plentiful that it is spilling out. This illusion of plenty creates a "bigger choice" for the customer, which is what all people want . . . more choices.

Shade

Where is your market located, under the trees or in the open parking lot? Shade is very important because limp, sunburned produce does not sell well. Since many farmers' markets are held rain or shine, investing in a tarp or cover is practically essential. Many clever home-made designs for supporting tarps look quite attractive, but make sure your structure can withstand the wind. Stay away from blue tarps unless the product you are selling looks good under blue light; most produce does not. Beach umbrellas work well for small setups, but may be especially troublesome on breezy days. A square canopy is a great investment.

Volume or Weight?

How will you be selling your produce? A legal scale will be required if you are to sell by weight. Depending on local tradition, some products sell better by weight, and some better by unit. Customary methods include corn by the dozen, green beans by the pound. You can even sell by the bagful, or by the quart. Transferring small fruit or cherry tomatoes from pint containers into a bag at the point of purchase allows you to re-use the more expensive berry box over and over.

Listing Prices

The average customer is shy, and will not ask a price. A large, attractive chalkboard or individual price signs for each container of produce is welcomed, especially for shoppers new to the market or new to your stand. Develop a kit that comes to market with you. You should include chalk and an eraser; tags (blank business cards are perfect), 5x8 un-ruled index cards, markers, scissors, tape and pens.

Rubber bands come in handy when you bunch products like radishes or asparagus.

Include a pad of note paper for jotting down new marketing ideas or special order requests from customers, or to give your name and phone number to a customer.

Bags

Always be on the lookout for bags of all sizes. Many customers are glad to recycle or donate their paper and plastic grocery bags. Always express your gratitude while accepting them, as there may be a time you'll run out of bags. Check out your community recycling center for an endless source of bags.

If need be, bags can be purchased at many of the larger "wholesale-type" stores. Trays made from soft drink boxes are efficient for transporting large numbers of seedlings.

Handling Cash

How will you handle your cash at the market? A cash box for bills and change keeps everything centralized and orderly. Some vendors use aprons, or wear clothes with big pockets so that they may roam about the stand and yet be able to make a sale from any point without having to run back to the vehicle. Others work out of a cash box they keep on a table or in the back of the vehicle. Keep bills out of sight and where they will not likely to be blown away by wind. Some farmers find it useful to record every sale in writing for reconciliation at the end of the day.

Bring plenty of change! The day you forget to bring sufficient small bills and coins will be the day your first two customers will only have $20 (or $50) bills! Bring enough change to cover at least your first two customers handing you a $20 bill. (Remember, if YOU are the farmer breaking the big bills, that means the shoppers are going to your stand first!) Most other sellers at market will be glad to help out if you run short of change, and you should be happy to do the same for them; but, don't become a pest by relying on your neighbors to bring enough change for your operation!

Setting your Prices

There are entire books written on this subject, but I'll include here just a few tips. The "Farmers' Market Report" published by the Virginia Department of Agriculture can give you current prices in their listing of farmers' markets around the state. Call 1-800-552-5521 and listen to the menu, press numeral [5], wait, then press numeral [8].

Other guides are local supermarket prices, other sellers at market, or whatever you feel you can justify charging. Walking the market to note what other members are charging and even asking them about their pricing is *not* price collusion, it is simply trading information. Getting together with other members to "set" prices, however, is illegal.

Bear in mind that supermarkets often make no money on produce! To them produce is an attraction to get customers into the store; they offer "loss-leaders" knowing shoppers will probably purchase more than they intended. Be honest about the value of what you are offering. Don't be afraid to charge more if your customers agree that it is of superior quality. (And vice versa, of course.) If an item is selling very fast and you will soon sell out, you may have priced it too low for that situation. Learn to judge the market by how things are selling and adjust your prices accordingly. Note, however, that a day of slow sales usually indicates not enough customers at market, and this can not be improved by lowering prices. Hold firm to your price, and give extra to the customers that do come out.

Remember that it is your responsibility to begin the process of educating consumers that what they are getting from you is NOT what they would get at the supermarket. This *really is* "**farm fresh**," and therefore comparison pricing is somewhat irrelevant. Cutting your price often results in only marginally more sales, and it generates in many buyers a distrust of the product being offered at "fire sale" pricing. Offering a volume discount on greater *quantities* works better than lowering prices on small unit sales.

Clean, Attractive and Orderly

Simple things like misting and rotating your produce can make the difference between making and losing a sale. Produce with soil on it sends most shoppers to buy elsewhere. This may mean you need to wipe your cukes and tomatoes with a damp cloth after a rainy day to remove dirt spots. Many farmers may have good healthy produce, but axle grease under their nails. That will not encourage people to buy your produce. It's a free country, but think twice before sitting down on the tailgate to read the newspaper with a cigarette dangling from your mouth. Surveys have proven that tobacco use is a "turn off" to many customers. Keep moving, chatting with fellow vendors. Customers love the "hum" of a good market. Above all, smile and talk to your prospects. Learn their first name. This will, more often than not, bring repeat sales in the future.

Know What You Are Selling

You'll find that some customers will quiz you on what variety of produce you are selling, what pesticides were used, when it was picked, how long it will last, and how to prepare it. People who ask questions are your most valuable target market - they care about their food supply. When you can, engage each customer in conversation for at least 60 seconds. If you can do that, they'll buy something. Also, let your customers pick out what *they* want. Just hold the bag and continue your conversation. Nine times out of ten, they'll fill it up!

For more help

The Virginia Farmers' Direct Marketing Association offers help and advice to markets and farmers. Write to:

VA FDMA
P.O. Box 1163
Richmond, VA 23218

Jeff Ishee is V.P. of the VA FDMA and Farm Director for WSVA Radio in Harrisonburg. He is also a columnist and author of the book *"Dynamic Farmers' Marketing: A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products."* The book is available via Amazon.com, or by sending $22.45 (ppd.) to:

Jeff Ishee
Bittersweet Farmstead
P.O. Box 52
Middlebrook, VA 24459

Foreword by Joel Salatin

Including Stories From the Frontlines of The Marketplace!

Dynamic Farmers' Marketing

A Guide to
Successfully Selling
Your
Farmers' Market Products

by Jeff Ishee

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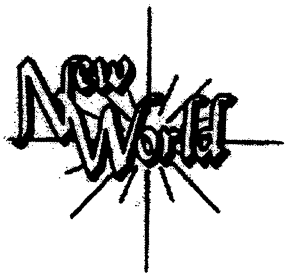
The New Farmers' Market

Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers & Communities

Vance Corum, Marcie Rosenzweig and Eric Gibson



New World Publishing
Auburn, California

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800-346-9140

ATTRA
Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas

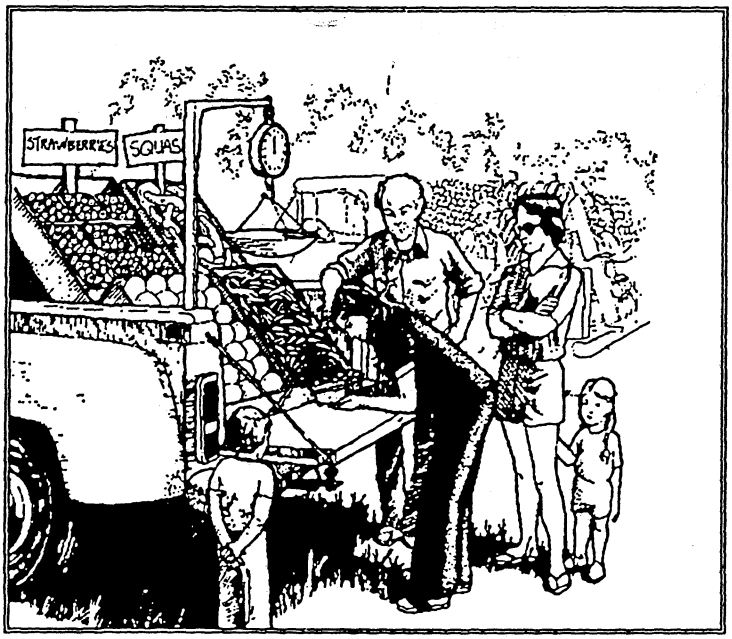
FARMER'S MARKETS

MARKETING & BUSINESS GUIDE

ATTRA is the national sustainable agriculture information center funded by the USDA's Rural Business -- Cooperative Service.

Abstract: *Farmers' markets are becoming increasingly popular as small growers are discovering the advantages of marketing directly to consumers. This publication is a resource for those who want to organize a farmers' market or sell at one.*

Prepared by Radhika Bala
ATTRA Technical Specialist
March 1999



Farmers' markets are a great way for small-scale producers to reach out directly to consumers, and develop marketing skills, new products and new markets. They work as 'business incubators' and help the farmer to test the product, network with other growers, and establish a wider customer base.

Setting up a farmers' market

Most state Extension offices can furnish information on how to organize and sell at farmers markets. ATTRA's *Direct Marketing* Information Package, gives additional helpful information, tips and resources and is available from ATTRA or on the Internet at http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/dirmkt.html. State departments of agriculture (SDA) also provide assistance with setting up farmers' markets. Yet another useful publication to review is ATTRA's *Adding Value to Farm Products: An Overview.*

A comprehensive address list of farmers' markets around the country is available on the Internet at http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm. Farmers' market associations listed at this site are usually willing to share information on their by-laws, guidelines, or mission statements.

Rules and regulations describe the purpose of the market, location, timings, what can or cannot be sold at the market, fees paid by vendor, whether it will be a producer-only market and other such details. The publication *Dynamic Farmers' Marketing* by Jeff Ishee contains sample farmers' market rules and guidelines. Although ATTRA does not maintain information on this subject, sample rules and regulations provided along with this publication should give an idea of what they ordinarily look like.

A new market may acquire non-profit status under the aegis of an existing city or community organization like the Chamber of Commerce or

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seek non-profit status on its own. Advice on insurance coverage may be obtained from Coleen A. Perry, who works for Interwest Insurance Services and whose family sells at farmers' markets (1).

A federal program that benefits both vendors and low-income customers is the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), established in 1992 and re-authorized in 1998. The goals of the program are twofold:

✓To provide fresh nutritious unprepared food such as fruits and vegetables from farmers' markets to WIC participants who are at nutritional risk; and
✓To expand consumer awareness and use of farmers' markets.

WIC participants are low-income, at-risk pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to 5 years. WIC vouchers allow them to purchase fresh vegetables and fruits at participating farmers' markets. The FMNP is offered in 35 states and other jurisdictions. For details, please contact USDA Food and Nutrition Service Public Information Staff at 703-305-2286, or by mail at 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 819, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.

Growers with experience in setting up a farmers' market emphasize the following (2):

❶The market must be located in a busy or central place.
❷It must be well-publicized.
❸Produce must be diverse and of high quality.
❹Produce must be displayed in a visually appealing manner.
❺The more farmers and farm products there are, the more customers there will be.
❻A good manager is necessary to promote the market and enforce its rules.
❼Farmers should work together, never undercut or otherwise undermine fellow growers.

Jordan Dawn who runs an OCIA certified farm in North Dakota, has had experience with setting up a farmers' market in 1993, in the small town of Paonia, CO (3). Dawn will set up another market in his hometown of Mitchell in May this year and has this advice to share. First, he emphasizes that there has to be strong interest and commitment on the part of farmers to sell at the market. Growers must begin to familiarize themselves with city, state and federal guidelines, especially agricultural and health department regulations. While there is usually no problem with raw produce, some states have fairly stringent regulations governing the sale of value-added farm products. The Chamber of Commerce and the City Hall provide information on taxes, insurance, and ordinances pertaining to signage, et cetera. While physical liability insurance is easily available, Dawn notes he has had no luck obtaining product liability insurance. Most farmers' markets, or at least those that he has contacted in the upper Midwest, simply operate without it.

Good location is essential, he says. The Paonia market did not do well because it was poorly located and had low visibility. The Mitchell farmers' market will begin this May on a private lot downtown, a prime tourist area that attracts approximately 500,000 people each summer. In addition to location, Dawn emphasizes the need for diverse and high-quality produce that appeals to the buyer's sense of sight and smell. A poor quality product and zero diversity will ensure that customers don't return, he says.

Selling at a farmers' market

Consumers are drawn to farmers' markets not just because they feel that the products are of superior quality, but also because they want to support local farmers and the local economy (4). Farmers' markets seem to work best for growers who have a variety of produce to sell of the type desired by customers. Having certified organic produce is a plus for marketing. The successful product mix may change from time to time, and may be oriented toward ethnic preferences. Market manager Dewayne Clinton (5) based in Poteau, OK, has a few marketing tips for sellers:

☛Make sure you don't run out of produce to sell to customers who arrive late.

- Make your displays colorful. Use product, packaging, signs, clothing to make your booth as attractive as possible. Layer the display.
- Be as friendly as possible.
- Price your products in round figures to speed up sales and eliminate problems with change.
- Maintain the freshness of the product; sell it as quickly as possible after harvest.
- Keep your ears open for new ideas about other crops to plant.

Promotional ideas for the market range from live music to sales of recipe books and T-shirts at the market. Marcia Halligan, manager of the Viroqua market in Wisconsin, says that the Saturday morning radio spots that list the items available at market are the most important promotion for their market (6). The most successful event is the children's market in fall, she says, where kids sell produce or crafts that they've raised or made, respectively.

Federal assistance

On January 21, 1999 the USDA announced the Farmer Direct Marketing Action Plan to help small farmers sell their products directly to consumers. New direct marketing networks and a one-stop information clearinghouse will be created within the next three years, as well as training programs for market managers and small farmers. A copy of the plan may be obtained from Errol Bragg at 202-720-8317 or from the Internet at http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/frmplan.htm

References:

1) Coleen A. Perry
Interwest Insurance Services
401 Watt Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95865-5188
916-488-3100; FAX 916-488-7143
cperry@iwins.com

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Rules of the Chapel Hill - Carrboro Farmers' Market. 3 p.

Schaefer, Karl F. No date. Making Farmers' Markets Sell. Carrboro Farmers' Market, Inc. 2101 Brookhollow Road, Efland, NC 27243. 2 p.

Resources:

For guidance and advice for setting up a market.

Kelly Williams
Agricultural Marketing Services
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Room 3071
Washington, DC 20090
202-720-4353

For information on setting up and selling at a farmers' market.

Mark Wall
Southland Farmers' Market Association
1308 Factory Place, Unit 68
Los Angeles, CA 90013
213-244-9190 (Ext 13)
www.cafarmersmarket.org

Should the market be interested in selling processed products, it is helpful to contact managers of farmers' markets that do. Two that come to mind are Randii McNear and Dave Gutknecht, managers of the Davis (CA) and Athens (OH) farmers' markets respectively. In addition, please get in touch with your state departments of health and agriculture.

Randii McNear of the Davis Farmers' Market
221 G Street, #201
Davis, CA 95616
916-756-1695
e-mail: rmacnear@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us

Dave Gutknecht (pronounced Gootneck)
Manager, Farmers' Market
270 Highland Avenue
Athens, OH 45701
740-592-1912

Tony Evans is Farmers' Market Coordinator at the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Of the 63 markets in the state, at least two-thirds are sponsored/supported by the department. Most of these, perhaps even all, are producer-only. Several sell value-added products and work closely with the health department. Evans, who helped set up the USDA's producer-only market in downtown Washington D.C. stresses the need to involve the health department when incorporating value-added items at the market. Honey, cheese, baked goods make great additions to the market, he says. To distinguish between the small-scale producer and larger, commercialized operations, Evans says each applicant is evaluated on a case-by-case basis — the size of the business, is it family-run, et cetera. The aim is to impart a strong sense of community and local color to the market. Evans is well-informed and will be glad to assist you. He prefers that you fax him a list of questions you'd like answered and follow it up with a call.

Tony Evans
Farmers' Market Coordinator
Maryland Department of Agriculture
800-492-5590 or 410-841-5761; FAX: 410-841-5987

Publications:

Copies may be obtained through Inter-Library Loan from your local library.

Gibson, Eric. 1994. Sell What You Sow! The Grower's Guide to Successful Produce Marketing. 302 p. New World Publishing, Auburn, CA. Available for $25.50 from:

New World Publishing
3037 Grass Valley Highway #8185
Auburn, CA 95602
Ph: 916-823-3886

Ishee, Jeff. 1997. Dynamic Farmers' Marketing. A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products. Available for $14.95 plus $2.50 s&h from

Bittersweet Farmstead
P.O. Box 52
Middlebrook, VA 24459
540-886-8477

Lee, Andy. 1993. Backyard Market Gardening: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Selling What You Grow. Good Earth Publications, Burlington VT. 351 p.

Good Earth Publications
P.O. Box 898
Burlington VT 05482
802-425-3201

Extension and agricultural department publications:

A Guide to Starting, Operating, and Selling in Farmers' Markets. Available free of charge from:
Cooperative Extension Service
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
785-532-6173

Direct Farm Marketing and Tourism Handbook
University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
Dept. of Ag. and Resource Economics
P.O. Box 210023
Tucson, AZ 85721-0023
520-621-2581
http://ag.arizona.edu/AREC/dmkt/tabcontents.html.

Farmers' Market Information Packet. Available free of charge from:
Joe Creech
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture
2800 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
800-580-6543

Farmers' Market Guide. Send $2 plus $1 s&h to:
Extension Publications
University of Missouri-Columbia
2800 Maguire
Columbia, MO 65211
573-882-2792

Farmers' Markets and Rural Economic Development. Available for $4 from:
Cornell University
Educational Resources Program
420 Kennedy Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
607-255-1837

R. Govindasamy, M. Zurbriggen, J. Italia, A. Adelaja, P. Nitzsche and R. VanVranken.
❶Farmers' Markets: Consumer Trends, Preferences, and Characteristics
❷Farmers' Markets: Managers Characteristics and Factors Affecting Market Organization
❸Farmers' Markets: Producers' Characteristics and Status of Their Business
Available on the Internet at:
http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~agecon/agmkt.htm
or contact:
Dr. Ramu Govindaswamy
Rutgers Coop. Ext. Marketing Specialist and Asst. Professor
Dept. of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics
Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey
55 Dudley Road
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8520
732-932-9171, Ext. 25.

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Agricultural Extension Service
University of Tennessee
P.O. Box 1071
Knoxville, TN 37901
423-974-7271

Lloyd, Renee et al. No date. Should I Grow Fruits and Vegetables. Farmers' Markets. Oklahoma State University Extension Facts, No. 185. 4 p. Available free of charge from:
Oklahoma State University Extension
606 S. Husband
Courthouse Room 103
Stillwater, OK 74074-4044
405-747-8320

Step Manual for Organizing and Establishing a Municipally-Sponsored Retail Farmers' Market Available for $30 from:
Michigan State University
Cooperative Extension Service
MSU Bulletin Office
10-B Agriculture Hall
East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1039

Hall, Charles R. No date. A Guide to Successful Direct Marketing. Texas Agricultural Extension Service, College Station, TX. Send $12 to:
Charles R. Hall
Department of Agricultural Economics
Texas A&M University
464 Blocker Building
College Station, TX 77843-2124
409-845-1772

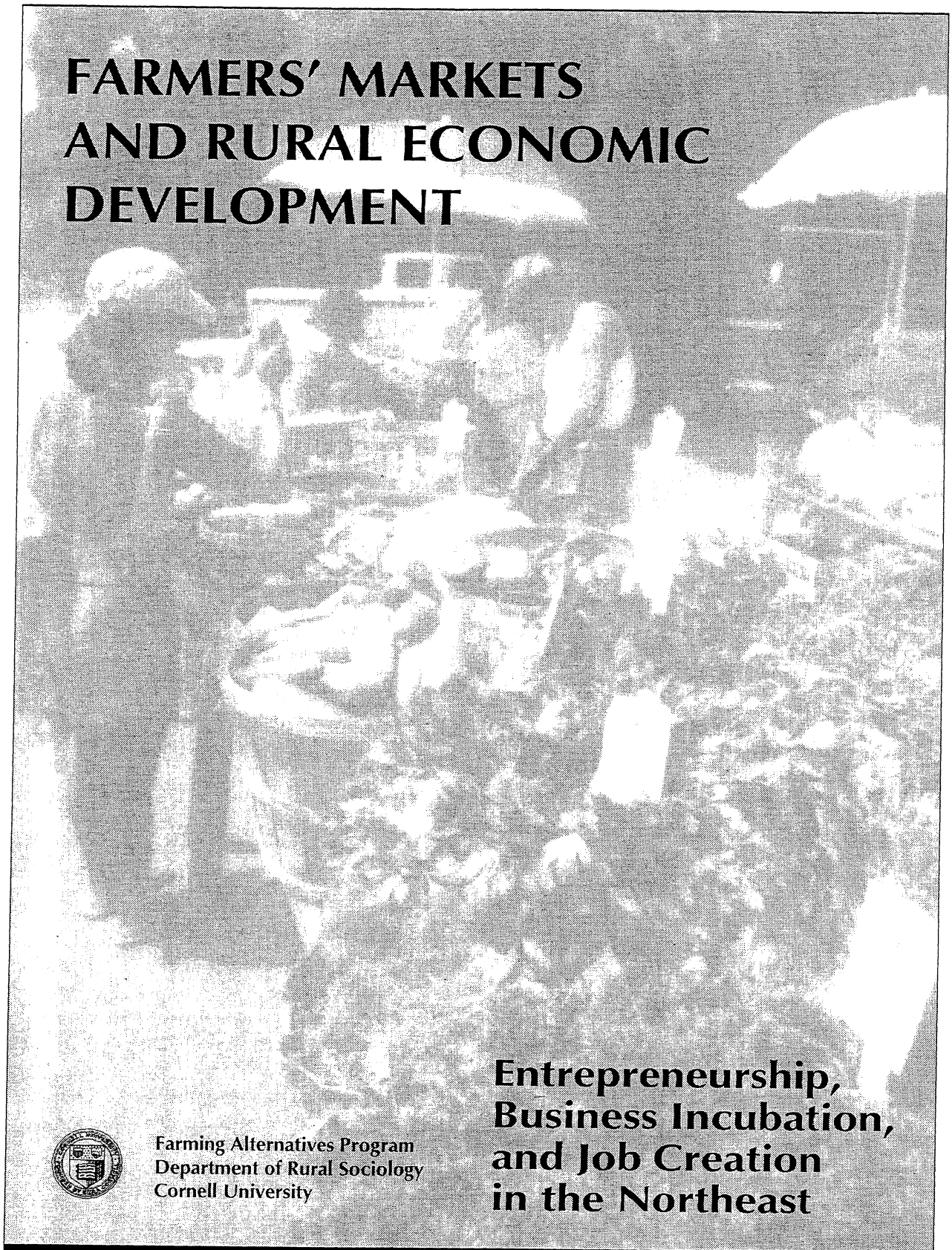
To Market! To Market! Send $0.98 in stamps to:
University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension System
44 Bank Row
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 448-8285

Starting and Strengthening Farmers' Markets in Pennsylvania. Available for $4 from:
Center for Rural Pennsylvania
Penn State Cooperative Extension
212 Locust Street, Suite 604
Harrisburg PA 17101
(717) 787-9555

Prepared by Radhika Bala,
ATTRA Technical Specialist

March 1999

FARMERS' MARKETS AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Entrepreneurship, Business Incubation, and Job Creation in the Northeast

Farming Alternatives Program
Department of Rural Sociology
Cornell University

Community Agriculture Development Series

Overview

Our study of farmers' market vendors in the Northeastern U.S. shows that farmers' markets provide a variety of benefits and opportunities for their vendors and host communities. They permit vendors to achieve as a group what can be extremely difficult to do as individuals. Furthermore, farmers' markets enhance business opportunities for new and existing enterprises, foster business skills and entrepreneurship, and have positive effects on rural families. Like *business incubators*, farmers' markets provide rich entrepreneurial environments that help to hatch homegrown businesses and jobs, and generate new economic wealth in rural areas. Written for local economic development officials, Agricultural and Farmland Protection Boards, and Cooperative Extension staff, this publication outlines some of the results of the vendor study and discusses how public agencies can assist farmers' markets in contributing to rural development.

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Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to the Northeast Center for Rural Development at Pennsylvania State University for funding this project. Special thanks to **Karene Booker** and **Sara Prout** for production assistance, and **Judy Green**, Farming Alternatives Program Coordinator, for valuable input.

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About the Farming Alternatives Program

The Farming Alternatives Program is dedicated to promoting a sustainable food and agricultural system which supports farm families and their communities. Our current program focus is on innovative marketing, value-added processing and sustainable farming practices. We conduct research, and provide information, educational programs, and referrals to diverse audiences, including Extension Agents and other agricultural educators, agriculture development organizations, and community decision leaders. The Farming Alternatives Program is supported by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University.

What is Community Agriculture Development?

Community Agriculture Development (CAD) involves community-based partnerships working to create or improve economic opportunities for farmers, by: (1) sustaining existing farms; (2) providing opportunities for beginning farmers; and (3) strengthening rural communities. There are more than 40 CAD initiatives throughout New York State. The Farming Alternatives Program supports these efforts through research, education, and this series of Community Agriculture Development Bulletins.

The information in this publication is for educational purposes only. Reference to specific commercial organizations, products, or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Farming Alternatives Program is implied.

Karl F. Schaefer
Carrboro Farmers' Market, Inc.
2101 Brookhollow Road
Efland, NC 27243

Market Manager since 1995
Phone answered Thursdays 6 to 9 P.M.
919.732.6223

Making Farmers' Markets Sell

The Carrboro Farmers' Market is entering its 20th season selling only the finest locally grown produce, plants, prepared foods, and crafts. The market is incorporated with an elected Board of Directors charged with the management of the market. The Carrboro Farmers' Market operates with a set of By-Laws which govern membership, dues, meetings, Duties of the Directors and Officers, and other general operating needs. Additionally, there are other rules and precedent used to operate the market.

The goal of the market is to provide a direct retail outlet for local farmers thereby promoting local agriculture, and as an alternative buying arrangement for consumers where high quality fresh products are available at reasonable prices in an atmosphere conducive to the exchange of information and ideas between the original producer and the consumer.

Some issues which markets must address:

I. What type of Market will you have?
- A Type A: grown and sold by the vendor directly to the consumer.
- B. Type B: Farmers can sell what they grow along with produce from other local farms.
- C. Type C: Farmers can sell any produce they can purchase, locally or not. Person selling the produce most likely had very little to do with the production.

II. How will you enforce the rules and still maintain a strong market?
- A. Inspections done by 2 members of the Board of Directors
- B. Random and mandatory inspections annually, semi-annually.
- C. Formal inspection form and appeal process
- D. Hire a Manager who is not a seller
- E. All vendors must have copies of the rules.
- F. Allow for termination of a vendor if they do not adhere to the market's rules.
- G.Be fair, firm, and very consistent in how you enforce the rules.

III. How will you ensure competitive pricing?
- A. Promote quality and presentation over price fixing.
- B. Promote harmony and cooperation between vendors.
- C. Promote perception of price equals quality. Customers will not always purchase the cheapest produce if educated on the differences in variety, taste, uses, etc.
- D. Insist on the posting of prices as a mandatory requirement to sell at the market.

IV. How will you deal with non-farm vendors?

A. Formulate guidelines on how you will deal with crafts, bakers, artists, or flea market type sellers.

B. Bakers should have water inspections, and be inspected by the Department of Agriculture annually to insure that they practice good manufacturing practices. Copies of inspections should be given to manager to keep on file.

C. Arts/Craft persons should need to be juried in order to be accepted. Possibly attempt to limit crafts/arts to farm related variety.

D. Determine how many spaces you wish to allocate to this classification of vendors.

E. Know how you will deal with farmers who want to sell crafts either value added or non farm type arts/crafts.

V. How will you fill as many spaces as you have to fill?

A. Establish annual number of weeks vendors must sell to reserve a space.

B. Create a temporary sellers system so that they occupy a space left open by the late arrival or early departure of a vendor while during the market season. Temporary sellers should call the manager prior to market day to have a space assigned if any are available.

C. Promote multiple season produce to vendors so they can sell for more then one season.

VI. How will you attract customers and keep them coming back for more?

A. Promote presentation, education of, and relationships with consumers by vendors. Promote the market as a place to engage in dialogue thereby creating an emotional connection by your customers to the experience of coming to the market. Presentation makes the difference between drawing a customer in or driving the customer away from your booth. Utilize what consumers are familiar with when they shop at supermarkets. There are good reasons why supermarkets keep produce sprayed and neatly presented.

B. Insist on high quality produce or whatever products you allow. Customers will not come back if even just one vendor sells them inferior quality products.

C. Educate, Educate, Educate until you are blue in the face as to who grows it, how you grow it, why you grow it, how to prepare it, how to serve it and how long you will have it.

D. Keep the market looking fresh and sanitary.

E. Promote special events like produce taste testing, chef or master gardener demonstrations,

F. Use fees to promote and support events linked to farming. Utilize free advertising verses static advertising. Do press releases, public service announcements, develop a relationship with the local Food Editors, donate items to a Public Radio or TV fund drive. Devise a scheduled and focused publicity campaign using as many avenues as are possible. Sell hats, T-shirts with market information on them. Give away bumper stickers, refrigerator magnets, key chains, and brochures about the market.

These are only a few of some of the many issues which a Farmers' Market will have to deal with in order to become established and thereby promoting both agriculture and consumer purchases of local produce.

If you have questions or would like to receive a copy of the Carrboro Farmers' Market By-Laws and Other Rules Used to Operate the Market, send me a self-addressed business size envelope and $3.00 for copying and postage. I will send you a copy only if you include the $3.00.

RULES OF THE CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO FARMERS' MARKET

1) Sellers must reside and produce the items they sell within a 50-mile radius of Chapel Hill or Carrboro and in the State of North Carolina.

2) Sellers must be the original producer of all items being sold. No buying and reselling of produce or other products is allowed.

A seller may lease land for crop production; however if that land has an established crop on it at the time of the origin of the lease, the seller must perform all operations necessary to manage that crop for at least one full season prior to the season in which the fruits of that crop are harvested for sale at the market. Documentation of the lease may be required.

A seller who purchases land with an established perennial crop on it may harvest and sell that crop in the year of purchase.

3) Sellers must submit an application at least two weeks before they plan to begin selling at the market. The seller's farm or business must be visited by representatives of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Farmers' Market, Inc. before his/her application will be considered for approval.

4) Sellers must pay a $15.00 annual membership fee. This fee must be paid at the first market attended each season.

5) Sellers must pay a daily selling fee of $5.00 for one space, $12.00 for two spaces, and $25.00 for three spaces. The daily selling fee at the Wednesday Market is $3.00.

Any seller who reserves more than one space must pay for all reserved spaces at least 27 weeks, or lose the right to reserve more than one space the following year.

6) Sellers who have attended a market for 17 weeks or more during the previous year may reserve a regular selling space for the season at that market, as space permits. Sellers who have attended 27 or more weeks may reserve 2 spaces as space permits.

7) A seller must occupy a reserved space by the first Saturday in May or loose the right to reserve that space for the remainder of the season unless he/she notifies the manager before the first Saturday in May of intent to begin selling at a later date. All exceptions are to be at the manager's discretion.

8) Reserved spaces will be held until 7:00 A.M..

9) The market will operate from 7:00 A.M. to 12:00 NOON.

10) Sellers should not move their vehicles in or out of the market area during times when such movement would pose a danger to people in the shopping area.

11) Each seller is responsible for cleaning up the area around his/her selling space.

12) Prices must be posted for all items sold.

13) Products which can be sold include:

a. Any vegetable grown by the seller from seeds, sets, or seedlings.

b. Any fruits, nuts or berries grown by the seller from trees, bushes, or vines on the sellers farm.

c. Any plant grown by the seller from seed, seedling, transplant or cutting.

d. Bulbs propagated by the seller.

e. Eggs produced by the seller's poultry.

f. Honey produced by the seller's bees.

g. Fresh (not frozen) baked goods made by the sell. All baked goods must be wrapped.

h. Preserves, pickles, relishes, jams, jellies, etc., made by the seller. No "low-acid" canned foods such as green beans, corn, peas, carrots, etc. may be sold. In addition, no canned tomato products may be sold.

i. Fresh cut or dried flowers grown by the seller.

j. Firewood cut by the seller.

k. Compost produced and bagged by the seller. No topsoil or unbagged compost may be sold.

l. Fish or meat from animals raised on the vendor's premises.

14) All produce must be of top quality, to be determined by the market manager.

15) All-prepared food items, meat and fish sold must meet state and local health regulations including the inspection of prepared foods seller's kitchens by NCDA health inspectors. Sellers must have a copy of their inspection form on file with the market manager, as well as with them when selling at market. No water or ice that comes into contact with meat or fish may be deposited or allowed to drain onto the market premises.

17) No animals may be sold or given away at the market.

18) Non-farm crafts produced by the seller may be sold at the Carrboro Market. All crafts must be approved by the crafts committee.

Other Rules and Precedent Used to Operate the Market

1. A copy of the By-Laws must be given to each member.

2. All suggestions, complaints, comments must be presented in writing to the Board of Directors, signed by the member with their name, address, and telephone number.

3. A current directory of all members with voting status will be given to all members at each annual meeting.

4. Space Assignment and Seniority System for all members eligible to reserve a selling space:
   a. space assigned previous season is automatically re-assigned.
   b. request for different or additional space will be assigned, if space available, first come first served, by seniority system:
      1. number of years with 17 weeks or more, if tie:
      2. number of years with 27 weeks or more
      3. if tie in number of years with 17 weeks or more but no years over 27 weeks then total number of weeks over 17 breaks tie.
      4. if tie at 17 and 27 weeks then total number of weeks over 17 breaks tie.

5. 15 space limit on sellers who produce only crafts or baked goods.

6. Members wishing to sell a new category of product (example-a baker now wants to sell produce) than they previously have, must fill out a new application and be approved by the Board of Directors.

7. Number of weeks sold at either market count towards 17 needed for active/voting member requirement as long as not from both markets in the same week(s).

8. Temporary Seller Program:
   a. New temporary seller- new applicant
   b. Old temporary seller- associate member from previous years
   c. Priority for assigning open spaces during market season is: old temps, old temps from the other market, new temps (farmers have priority over crafts and bakers).
   d. Temporary sellers can loose space at any time if all reserved spaces are filled.
   e. Temporary sellers must call the manager Thursday evening before they plan to sell on Saturday to see if there is space for them.
   f. If a temporary seller sells 17 weeks or more then they become a full active member of the market.

9. A minimum of 7 active members must be reinspected each year.

Vol. 20 #2

Getting Started in a Farmers' Market

BY ELLIE MACDOUGALL

A lot of people in MOFGA have far more experience in farmers' markets than I have, but many also have told me that they've been in it so long it's hard to remember what it was like starting out. Last year, our farm completed it's second year at market. The learning curve has been straight up, and I've been encouraged by experienced marketers to share my perspective with you now, while it's still fresh.

"A farmers' market is the only business I know where you can show up with a case of produce and you're in business," says Frank Beckwith of Beckwith Gardens in Yarmouth.

Perhaps you found yourself with an overabundance of cabbage in the garden last year courtesy of the cool, wet summer. Maybe you had a lot more tomato seedlings than you had room to plant last spring. Perhaps you made pints and pints of pickled onions each fall — but didn't want to go through the hassle of wholesaling to stores or selling from your own home. If these scenarios reflect your situation, consider a farmers' market.

❒ Some Prerequisites to Consider

You have to like dealing with people because, heaven knows, you'll soon find that you're not just selling produce. You'll be filling the role of advisory chef ("Gee, this fennel looks interesting but how do I cook it?"), extension agent ("Well, organic means you just don't use chemicals, right?"), diplomat ("How much could I buy this for if I come back at the end of the day?") and a few other roles you never counted on.

You have to understand what your customers want: quality produce, fair prices, clean, attractive presentation, and knowing you'll be there on time every week so they can depend on buying from you.

And, you must accept that sometimes, for whatever reason, you won't make your goal for the day. Or you will misread demand for a particular item and end up bringing home lots of lettuce for the chickens. Or you'll find yourself face-to-face with a customer who will grouse and moan no matter what you say or do. It can be a test of character.

❒ Ideal for the Small Gardener

Farmers' markets present real advantages to people with limited time and growing space. Explains Ramona Snell of the Snell Family Farm in Bar Mills, "It reduces the time you spend in sales—condenses it, like milk. People are there to buy. You're there to sell. You don't need to be big. You don't have to worry about being interrupted by customers when you're working in the field.

"You don't need much to get started, either, and you don't need to go into debt. You can make your own decisions right on the spot—something a large corporation can't do. And the overhead is low. All you need is a vehicle, a table and insurance."

Compared with wholesaling, says Frank Beckwith, "It's less time consuming. There are no small deliveries, no hunting for places to park. It's very hard to make money wholesaling, especially if you're small, because you spend so much time running around."

Philosophical issues arise, too. Brewster Kneen, in his book *From Land to Mouth*, points out that the result, perhaps even the objective, of our current food delivery system has been to distance people from the source of their food. This has allowed the domination of agribusiness over every aspect of our food supply.

In contrast, at a farmers' market, you stand behind your product—literally. You can look each customer in the eye and offer an opportunity to choose the type, variety and quality of their food. You can sell the food you grow through your own ingenuity and hard work directly to the people who will be putting it on the table for their own families. There's a lot to be said for fostering this kind of relationship.

❒ How to Get Started

The fundamentals of selling at market are pretty straightforward, but a lot of nuances can take years to learn. The best way to see what could work for you is to check out some of the farmers' markets in your area.

One consistent piece of advice that is offered to newcomers is, "find your niche." You may discover, for example, that what sells well at one market may not move at another just 20 miles away. A market may have a niche that no one is filling — small fruit, fresh eggs or herb seedlings. Target that niche, but hedge your bet by selling enough variety of items to cover the vagaries of weather and to appeal to a wide range of customers.

Some markets may operate only in the height of summer, while others may be open from April through December. By and large, the earlier in the season you can start at market, the sooner you'll build a loyal clientele that will carry you through the season.

You don't need a fancy rig to sell at market. A vehicle, produce, insurance, table (or boxes to keep food off the ground) and imagination are the bare essentials. MacDougall photo.

Some markets are large, structured and more competitive. Others are small, loosely confederated and more laid back. There's a big difference in the ambience of each market, and you should find the one that feels most comfortable for you.

Larger, more established markets often can be filled as early as October of the previous year. Smaller markets may not have any requirements at all. Either way, you should contact the marketmaster in advance to learn the ground rules.

What you are permitted to sell at each market can vary, too. For example, in Brunswick, the farmers have defined precisely how many people can sell produce, how many can specialize in herbs, how many craftspeople can participate and what geographic area participants must come from. In Portland, the city operates the market based on a statute originally written in the 1890s that has no limit on the number of participants but sharply defines what and how items can be sold (i.e. anyone selling baked goods must have a separate license and a push-cart). In contrast, the Springvale market is small, unstructured and simply a case of showing up on Saturday morning before the shoppers hit the streets.

Even if a market doesn't require it, it's a good idea to have personal liability insurance — and

Make your signs simple and easy to read to attract new customers and remind old customers of changing seasonal offerings. MacDougall photo.

Ramona Snell (in the knit cap) started out with a Chevette towing a trailer. Now her displays stop crowds from April to December at the Portland Farmers' Market. MacDougall photo.

it's not that expensive when you consider the alternative of a lawsuit by someone who trips over a water jug next to your truck. Your local insurance agent can advise you.

❑ The First Day at Market

The first day really begins the day before. Plan on spending at least half—and perhaps all—of the day before to prepare your products and pack your vehicle. If you decide to go for the freshest picked lettuce at market, plan on getting up with the chickens to pick, cool and pack your produce before you leave for market. You should be set up and ready for business when the market opens. In summer, many regular customers come by first thing while the weather is still cool and the produce selection is greatest.

What kind of vehicle do you need? At the Portland market, people arrive in everything from a customized ten-ton rig with built-in shelves and awnings to a Chevette with plastic buckets full of cut flowers in the back seat. Whatever you have, you can make it work.

To display your merchandise, any folding table will do. Or you can use boards on sawhorses or milk cartons—whatever keeps the food off the ground. You might consider a tarp or patio umbrella (preferably set in a bucket of concrete in case of wind) to hold off sudden showers and keep tender produce from wilting in the sun. You can write prices clearly on index cards. A sign with your farm's name and location is a nice touch.

You'll need a cash box or apron with pockets and plenty of change and $1.00 bills. A calculator can be a blessing when things get busy. A legal scale is helpful but not necessary; many people sell produce by the piece to eliminate the time and hassle of weighing. You'll also need paper bags. You should bring a hat, slicker, snack and thermos of something hot or cold. If you sell plants, bring jugs of water for them. And if you have a truck with a standard length bed, bring an old hoe or other item to snag goods from deep in the back. Your knees and back will thank you.

Some customers will want to pay by check. Few farmers I've spoken with have had a problem with this. In fact, it can be an advantage. Write down the name and address on the check and you can begin a mailing list that will enable you to contact your customers in advance and remind them to shop with you next year.

❑ Find Your Product Niche

This bears repeating. The real trick is to find what you do better than anyone else. It all depends on the direction of your interests, the physical properties of your garden and how much time you can devote to growing for market. You may find you have time to market all season—or only during one or two summer months. Whatever your capacity, the market is there for you.

You can start in some markets with greenhouse grown flowering plants or cut flowers for Easter or Secretary's Day. In May, you can offer field dug ornamentals and greenhouse seedlings: vegetables, herbs and bedding plants.

June brings early vegetables and field cut flowers that kick off the season clear through the first frost. After Labor Day, potted mums, apples and cider make their appearance. Some marketers go right through to Christmas with greens, trees and wreaths for the holidays. It's cold, hard work, but growers like Ramona Snell are at the market "until the stuff freezes on the truck."

Some farmers differentiate themselves by offering produce picked the same day it's sold. Others grow certain hard-to-find gourmet or heirloom varieties of otherwise common vegetables. Small fruits garner excellent prices. And, of course, organic growers offer an alternative to "conventionally" grown produce. There's also the option of processing some of your own food into herb vinegars, herb butters, goat cheese and yogurt, baked goods, pesto and other products. Processing foods at home requires only that you obtain a home food establishment license from the Maine Department of Agriculture for $10.00 each year, have your water tested, and have an annual inspection of your kitchen.

When you think about it, a farmers' market is a true free market. You're your own boss. You determine your own product line. You set your own prices. You're limited only by your imagination—and the broad guidelines of the market.

❑ A Perfect Test Market

A farmers' market can take you in directions you never dreamed if you allow the process to evolve. For example, we decided to offer herb vinegars as an adjunct to our salad greens last summer. Customers came by asking questions like, "Do you have something that would go well on cucumbers? Or beet greens?" So we tried different combinations and relied heavily on customer feedback to guide product development.

We also looked for products that we could cross-sell with our organic hen eggs. We began offering a dried herb mix to pep up omelettes and scrambled eggs. Then we added a mix for tomato sauce. By the end of summer, it was a full product line—all developed based on customer feedback.

A scale, as Frank Beckwith has, is handy but not essential. You can save time by selling produce by the piece or bunch. MacDougall photo.

Sometime in July, a woman from Alaska asked if we shipped, because she liked our herb products but didn't want to carry them home in her suitcase. The end result was a start-up mail order business offering a range of culinary herb products that extended our sales through Christmas and brought in 25% of our farm's income in 1992. Needless, to say, we have a lot of new ideas to test at market in 1993.

❑ A Part of Our Maine Culture

Certainly, farmers' markets offer a range of opportunities for backyard growers and market gardeners, but there's more to it than just earning a living. In today's modern world, especially in Maine's larger cities where many people feel alone and isolated from their neighbors or stressed by their work, the market offers a place where they can surround themselves with the brilliant colors of flowers, the sweet aroma of strawberries in season, the richness of fresh, healthy food. It's an unthreatening, uplifting oasis where most people walk by with a smile. And it's a place where, over the course of a season, you'll work hard, but you'll also make many friends—farmers and customers alike. That alone can make selling at market an experience you'll want to carry with you for the rest of your life. ❑

About the author: Ellie MacDougall owns Blue Sky Farm in Wells.

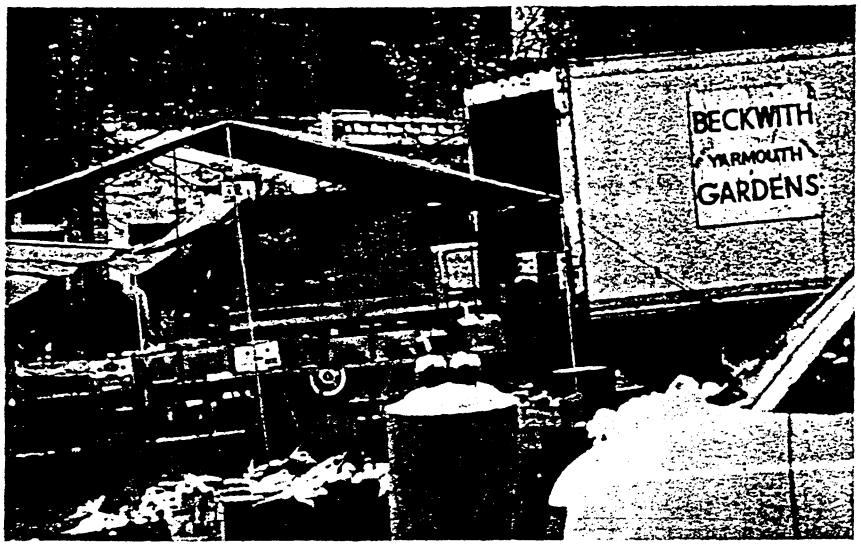
Take a Short Course in Farmers' Markets

The Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets (MFFM) offered a great service in 1992. Two experienced marketers, Dick Keogh of the Keogh Family Farm in Hebron, and Tom Roberts of Peacemeal Farm in Dixmont, offered a day-long hands-on "seminar" at their respective markets.

They invited anyone interested in selling at a farmers' market to join them for a day to get a feel for how things work. If they offer this opportunity again in 1993, you'd be well advised to set aside a day and take advantage of their knowledge. You can find out more about MFFM and its quarterly Selling Outdoors newsletter by writing to Dick Keogh, RFD 1 Box 234, Hebron, ME 04238.

The MFFM can tell you about farmers' markets in your area (more seem to be sprouting up all the time, while others do occasionally wither away). Or, contact the Maine Department of Agriculture and ask for the 1993 listing of farmers' markets dates, times and locations.

— Ellie MacDougall



On a cold, rainy October day, Frank Beckwith's canopy keeps his produce dry and makes shopping easier for customers. In summer, it keeps tender greens — and people — from wilting.

MacDougall photo.

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DO'S AND DON'TS OF A SUCCESSFUL FARMERS' MARKET

Organization of a Farmer's Market

Since the key to success of any endeavor is organization, I would like to emphasize that point by giving you some general guidelines for organizing and operating a Farmers' Market and also some specific details used in the organization and operation of Rural Mountain Producers Exchange.

The first step in organizing a Farmer's Market is to determine if there is a need and desire of both local growers and the community to establish a market. It is helpful to seek input from county extension agents, Vo-Ag teachers, Chambers of Commerce, city councils, church groups and other established markets, to determine the feasibility of a market in your area. It is also very important to utilize all forms of media, including print, T.V. and radio, both during and after the market is organized. Keeping the media well-informed can generate many opportunities for free publicity, as well as cooperation and support from the community.

The next step in organizing a Farmers' Market is to hold a general meeting of all interested persons, including prominent leaders of the community, as well as local growers. It is this joint effort of the community and the growers which makes a successful market. At this meeting you should present the background information you have accumulated and then discuss the specific ideas and needs of your market. You should then appoint a committee or elect a Board of Directors from the membership that sets policy and they should appoint or hire a manager to implement this policy. Small markets of 10-15 spaces might be managed by an extremely dedicated volunteer, but for a larger market you should hire a manager, preferably from within the membership. By electing the Board of Directors and the manager from within the membership, you help keep the control of the market within the hands of the members. The Board of Directors then becomes instrumental in establishing a set of bylaws and guidelines for the operation of the market. These guidelines should include such things as qualification for membership, the location of the market, the days and hours of operation, what is to be sold at the marketplace, and the fee to be paid by members.

In the beginning it is best to start slow with Saturdays only and build into a regular three day/week market as produce becomes available and customer demand increases. But you should make sure your options for future days are outlined in your contract. Mornings are preferable due to the cooler weather which enhances the freshness and longevity of the produce, and six hours is an ample amount of time to remain in the marketplace. It is advantageous to have a large pool of growers within a 50 mile radius of market to supply a constant variety of produce for the large populace of an area. It also provides production flexibility based on a wider range of growing conditions (i.e., climate, water, soil type, etc.).

Traditionally and historically farmers' markets have been located around the downtown square of small towns and often such a unique setting can contribute not only to the success of a market but also to the revitalization of a downtown area.

You should charge a membership fee, plus a stall fee or a % of a commission of individual sales which generates essential capital for advertising, insurance, supplies, paperwork and managerial fees.

Including plants and crafts in your market allows starting 30 days earlier for plant season in April, and it is possible to extend it 30 days longer with the addition of crafts in the fall. Quality handmade crafts and plants (i.e., annuals, perennials, herbs, and bedding plants, plus fresh cut flowers, dried flowers and arrangements, will draw additional customers and, more importantly, help finance a Market.

Some other important factors to be addressed are the need for ample parking for your customers and restrooms which might be open for the general public.

The final key to the success of a Farmers' Market depends on the quality of products produced and sold by the individual members who join in the overall organization of the market with the local support of the community.

Organization of the Rural Mountain Producers Exchange

R.M.P.E., Inc., was founded in February of 1974 with the aid of a grant from the Economic Opportunity Agency. It is a non-profit organization created for the purpose of developing and operating locally owned and operated farmers' markets in the N.W. Arkansas area, affording the small, noncommercial farmer,

craftsperson and plant grower a marketplace for their products.

With the support of local banks and businesses and in conjunction with the City of Fayetteville, the Fayetteville Farmers' Market was established under Section 13-13 of the Fayetteville Code of Ordinance, Ordinance No. 2846 and is subject to regulation as follows:

a) A farmers' market is hereby established in the City of Fayetteville. Said marketplace shall be located on the interior parking spaces of the downtown square. (Those parking spaces adjoining the Old Post Office and on the sidewalks adjoining said parking spaces.)

b) The marketplace established hereby may be opened on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, but shall not be open on any other day. Said marketplace shall open no earlier than 6:00 a.m. and shall close no later than 1:00 p.m.

c) The following articles and no others may be sold at the marketplace established hereby: vegetables, honey, raw juices, molasses, fruit and other produce grown and sold by the vendor thereof, and plants, artwork and craftwork grown, produced and sold by the vendor thereof. All products sold at the marketplace must be produced in compliance with all applicable regulations of the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas State Plant Board.

d) The fee to be paid by each vendor for the use of the marketplace shall be $5.00 per year plus a 10% commission of gross proceeds realized by the vendor from sales at the marketplace.

e) It shall be unlawful for any person to use any public street, public parking place, or public sidewalk as a place of business except as authorized by this section: provided, any merchant whose building is adjacent to a public sidewalk may conduct business thereon if pedestrian traffic is not obstructed.

Board of Directors

The Fayetteville Farmers' Market consists of a nine (9) member board of directors who are elected by the market membership at the annual business meeting in February of each year. They serve a three-year term

without pay except for mileage to and from the Board meetings when market is not in session. The Board meets every third Thursday of the month to take care of business and approve applications.

Qualifications for Membership

Qualifications for membership in the Fayetteville Farmers' Market require that you be a permanent resident of a four (4) county area which includes Washington, Benton, Carroll, and Madison counties. The main qualification for our Farmer's Market is that you must grow and/or make and sell your own products. Applications are usually approved by the Board pending a farm visit and report from the manager to insure the applicants are growing their own produce and not supplementing it with purchased produce. The annual membership fee is $5.00 per family and entitles the family to one vote. Having one membership per household keeps the point system fair and does not permit a group of individuals to combine production to acquire more points. Since produce is the backbone of any Farmers' Market, we try to keep our membership with at least 80% produce and the remaining 20% comprised of plants and crafts. Produce always has priority over plants and crafts and is given first available space for new members.

How It Works

<u>You</u> grow/make what <u>you</u> sell and <u>you</u> sell what you grow/make. All items on the market must be produced and sold by the members. We do not allow bought items to be resold on our market. All craftwork must be original, handcrafted items which comply with the set of craft guidelines and juried by a craft committee. No canned, processed or baked goods or animals may be sold or given away at the market. All plants must be inspected by the Arkansas State Plant Board before being sold at the market and any member selling nursery stock must display their Ark. State Nursery License.

Market Spaces and Attendance

Assigned parking spaces are determined based on the basis of a point system, whereby you get one point for each year of active membership, and this is the only point that carries over from year to year. You get one point for each market attended during that season. This is an incentive for members to attend the weekday markets in order to increase their points to earn a permanent spot on Saturdays. And you get two points for every dollar amount sold on the market. This is how members accumulate the most points most rapidly.

At the end of each season, these points are totaled and members then choose their assigned space for that next season in accordance with their position on the list of points. Since we have only 40 parking spaces around the square and perhaps an additional 10 spaces which we can utilize without a vehicle and over 130 members this year, some old members who do not have enough points and all new members do not have a regularly assigned space. Therefore, they must start by attending weekday markets to build their points for a space on Saturdays. If a member with a regularly assigned space is not there by 8:00 a.m. and they have not notified the manager that they might be late, their space is used by waiting members who do not have a regularly assigned space. Produce always has top priority on our market over plants and crafts, and those members who have attended weekday markets get first preference for a spot. It usually works so that spaces are filled in with plants and crafts when we do not have a lot of produce on the market (early spring and late fall). Many members with regularly assigned spaces may have only one crop (i.e., blueberries, peaches, etc. with a short season, so that their space can be used by others during the remainder of the season. Or, those with assigned spaces might be out of town on various Saturdays due to vacation, business, illness, crop scarcity, etc. In order to accommodate as many of our members as possible with the least amount of confusion, all members with regularly assigned spaces must keep the manager informed as to when they will not be using their space in order to coordinate the use of it among other members without regularly assigned spaces.

Product Guarantee and Prices

Quality produce and product guarantees are a must for a successful farmers' market. A constant supply of a wide variety of quality produce is absolutely necessary to attract customers. Quality, cleanliness, freshness, and well-displayed products are very important. The market should also insure a product guarantee whereby if for any reason the customer is dissatisfied, the vendor will replace the product or refund the money. If inferior quality produce is offered at a reduced price, the customer should be alerted to this fact. After all, satisfied customers are your best form of advertisement, and one complaint reflects poorly upon the whole market.

Vegetables and fruits may be sold by weight, but it is slow, and approved scales are expensive. Since we do not have an expensive scale which complies with

the State Department of Commerce's National Bureau of Standards in Handbook #44, we sell by the box (quart, 1/2 gal., and gal.), basket (1/2 peck, peck, 1/2 bushel, bushel), bunch, dozen or pot size, etc. If everyone sells in the same quantities, it helps to standardize the pricing and allows customers to purchase bulk quantities for canning and freezing at a reduced price. Prices can be determined by monitoring the wholesale and retail prices of local grocery stores on a weekly basis and by balancing the supply and demand of produce on your market It is usually best to set an average price somewhere between the local wholesale and retail price based on the individual grower's cost of production. Since the quality of produce varies greatly with size, freshness, cleanliness, organically grown, etc., you should have a suggested price range whereby higher quality produce is sold at a higher price, and inferior quality produce is sold at a lower price.

Price cutting is not in the best interest to a market or its individual members. All things being equal in quality and quantity makes selling within a price range quite reasonable. even if you have produce left at the end of the market, you should not cut your prices unless you can sell a large quantity, such as bushels. It is better to take it home or give it to a neighbor, Salvation Army, elderly nutrition center or shelter rather than undermine yourself, and other market members.

In closing, I would like to restate the importance of organization for a successful Farmers' Market and remind you that what is good for the market as a whole is consequently good for the individual members and therefore a positive attitude of members working together for the overall betterment of the organization is what truly makes a successful Farmers' Market.

Open A City Farmers' Market

Good for both growers and communities, this direct marketing approach is enjoying renewed popularity in North America. Here are tips on starting a market in your area.

Connie Buscemi

This Chicago market is one of 20 that will be operating throughout the city this summer.

By Lisa Heacox
Associate Editor

"FARMERS' markets are good for the social fabric of the community," declares Bob Chorney, executive director of Farmers Markets Ontario, Brighton, ON. "People come for the freshness and stay for the fun."

Indeed. Judging by the sheer number of markets popping up in cities across the U.S. and Canada in the last five years (the numbers have almost doubled according to an informal AVG survey), consumers love these bright, bustling gathering spots.

But such markets are also great for growers. Here you can get a better price than through wholesale channels. You have cash in hand on the day of sale. You can sell odd-sized or oversized product. And you can offer a wider range of tastier — and fun to grow — vegetable varieties than wholesale markets will allow.

If you don't have a farmers' market nearby, why not take the initiative and team up with other growers, city officials, or community service groups and start one?

Decide Who Runs The Market

First decide who will actually launch and run the market: a grower association, the city, or a community team drawn from city government, business leaders, local service clubs, shoppers, and farmers. These, then, are the three types of markets: community-run, city-run, and grower-run. Each type has its benefits.

Bob Chorney, executive director of Farmers Markets Ontario has found the ***community-run market*** structure ideal. A man with a mission in his province, he has helped organize 65 new farmers' markets there in the last five years, virtually all using this team leadership approach.

"With these markets the story is the same," explains Chorney. "A local 'champion' will contact me. It might be a mayor, municipal government, business improvement association, service club, chamber of commerce, or agricultural society wanting to make better use of its fairgrounds. They say 'We'd like to create a people place in our community.'"

City-run markets are perhaps the most common in the U.S. Here the city government will appoint one or two municipal staffers to oversee the market (often in addition to their regular duties) and hire managers to tend to it on-site. All profits from farmer space rental go back into the market and to the city's general fund. This structure has worked well in the Chicago area, as well as in Ann Arbor, MI and Santa Monica, CA.

Grower-run markets are the way to go, says Ken Jevec of the North San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market Association, Templeton, CA. In this set-up, growers band together to form an association — basically a pool of vendors the market can pull from — and pay a nominal fee to join. Jevec, manager of three of the five markets his association puts together, believes producers may better understand what they need and how the market should run.

Iron Out Administrative Details

Next you need to work out a few administrative details:

Form a board of directors/ steering council. This governing body consists of anywhere from seven to 12 people, depending on the size and needs of your market.

In a community-run market, volunteers can come from city employees, downtown merchants, service club members, farmers, and shoppers. With a farmer-run market, the board will consist primarily of growers. (In a city-run

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For More Help...

Contact these sources for more information:

- Bob Chorney, Farmers' Markets Ontario, 75 Bayshore Rd., RR #4, Brighton, ON, Canada K0K 1H0; 613-475-4769.
- Pam Roy, Santa Fe Area Farmers' Market, Route 9, Box 61, Santa Fe, NM 07505; 505-983-4098.
- *Step Manual for Organizing and Establishing A Municipally Sponsored Retail Farmers' Market.* (Publication NB 06). Available for $30 prepaid from Michigan State University, P.O. Box 231, East Lansing, MI 48823-0231; 517-355-0240.

Open A Farmers' Market

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market, no board may be needed — one or two municipal employees oversee operations.)

Draw up by-laws. This document will outline board size, responsibilities, and duration of terms. The by-laws also pinpoint objectives. Nancy Ricketts lists the goals of the Oak Park Farmers Market, located in a Chicago suburb: "to enhance the quality of life in Oak Park by providing fresh, high-quality produce; a community meeting place; and consumer education."

Choose a "corporate" designation. For grower-run markets, this simply means you'll need to decide if the market will be a non-profit or for-profit business. Jevec's association is officially tagged a "non-profit mutual benefit corporation." To get this status, he explains, assorted legal paperwork is needed, and a group will likely have to hire a lawyer. "The costs up front may be a little intimidating — maybe $500 to $1000 — but it's well worth it in the long run."

Running A Market

Once you've got a basic operating structure, your board will need to form committees to:

Secure start-up funding, if needed. Markets run by the city or community groups have ready funding from city coffers. However, grower-run markets may need to depend on donations from a grower(s) or a state grant. Jevec says savings and loan companies do not lend to farmers' markets.

Set fees. You can charge fees to vendors three ways: set a one-time annual fee that covers the whole market season; set a stall or space fee charged per space per market day; or collect a gross percentage of each vendor's sales.

Draw up rules. These will govern who — and what products — can participate in the market. For instance, you may want to limit sales to fresh produce and not allow crafters. Rules may also cover stall appearance and safety requirements, as well as outline the need for permits required by the city or state. You don't need to reinvent the wheel — get copies of other markets' rules and decide what works best for you. Be open to changing rules if needed.

Recruit growers. Consider calling farming friends and neighbors first, then try the Farm Bureau, extension service, county agents, and state grower associations for lists of possible vendors, suggests Ricketts of Oak Park Farmers' Market. Visit established farmers' markets nearby and see if vendors would like to sell at your new market as well. Another option: place ads in vegetable industry publications or local newspapers.

Chorney says finding a solid base of growers is a market's biggest challenge. "The most important job your steering committee is going to face is recruiting top-notch vendors with high-

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—Billy Powell
Powell Farms, Troup, TX

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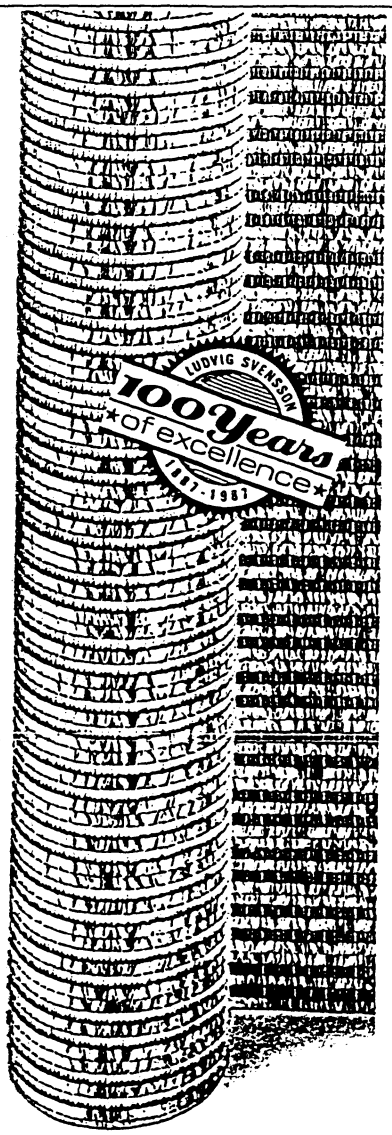

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Open A Farmers' Market

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quality product," he says. Another guideline: Vendor diversity is a key to success.

Line up a location. The location of your market will make or break it. Choose a central spot in the community with easy access for customers as well as vendors; plenty of parking; visibility from main roads including freeways (if possible); public restrooms; and a telephone.

Pam Roy, head of the Santa Fe Area Farmers' Market in New Mexico suggests the parking lots of churches, state or city buildings, and shopping centers or malls. She also recommends plaza areas or public parks.

Hire a market manager. He or she will oversee on-site operations during the market day, including assigning spaces to growers, enforcing market rules, and collecting daily fees (if applicable).

Jevec lists these qualifications: "You need someone who's knowledgeable of produce and has marketing skills. He or she's got to be creative, organized, and flexible — especially to work with community leaders and customers."

Connie Buscemi, coordinator of Chicago's city-run farm market program, says college students on summer break monitor the city's 12 seasonal markets (increasing to 20 markets this summer). "Then our two staff members travel from market to market to spot-check them," she says.

Purchase liability insurance. Your city may have insurance that covers a farmers' market on municipal property — but you may need additional coverage. And you'll need insurance if you're on private property.

Do your homework. Costs vary widely, often because private carriers just aren't sure how to classify farmers' markets in their rate schedules. For instance, the North San Luis Obispo County Association with its five locations has been charged from $800 to $3500 per year, while the Santa Monica Farmers' Market's three locations have to pay a total of $14,000.

Set market days and hours. Saturday is the most popular day in many communities, but large metropolitan areas can have a different market running every day of the week. Choose times by analyzing the habits and needs of your customers. For instance, a weekday market's opening and closing times should not coincide with rush-hour traffic.

Promote the market. Advertising doesn't have to be expensive. All you may need are ads in local newspapers, flyers sent to homes or posted in businesses, or banners/signs on city streets.

Avery of Santa Monica says the public loves the engaging atmosphere of the market and the healthful, fresh produce it promises. "We have customers who live to shop at the market. In fact, we have some elderly customers who have to take two buses to come out every week." □

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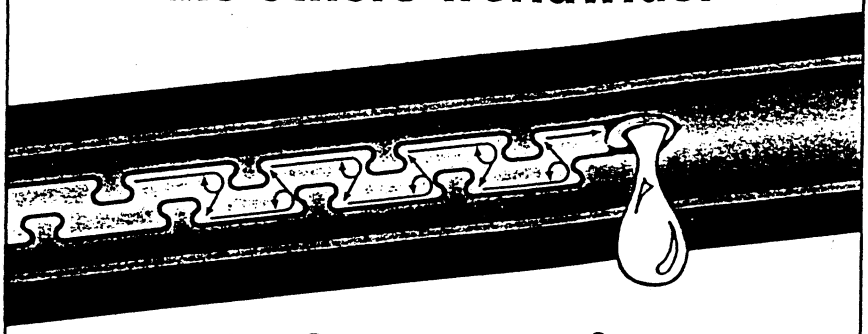

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COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA): A Value Added Alternative Enterprises

What is Community Supported Agriculture? A new partnership between farmers and consumers. Consumers and farmers working together on behalf of each other to sustain the environment and the farm. It is local farmers producing the food for local people. Farmers produce the food and the consumers share the costs of supporting the farm and share the risk of variable harvests. Most CSA's focus on organic or reduced input agriculture. CSA's are groups that comprise customers reaching out to farmers and saying we will share the risk.

CSA = "food producers" + "food consumers" + annual commitments

CSA's are often described as "food with the farmer's face on it."

What does CSA mean to the small farmer? CSA is a direct marketing alternative for small-scale growers. It is a way a farmer can get his money before he/she produces and delivers the crop. You sell it before you grow it. It is a way the farmer can get the consumer to share in the risk of agriculture production. It is a way the farmer can show the consumer how their food is grown in a safe environmental way. It is a way for a farmer to obtain a larger share (100 percent) of the consumers dollar (In 1998, the farmer received 20 cents versus 37 cents in 1980 of the consumer food dollar. The other 80 cents goes to the middleman.) It is a way for the farmer to have an established market for his product. It is an opportunity to be called "That is my farmer" by your customer.

What does it mean to the consumer? Consumers have access to high quality, wholesome, fresh food (24 hours or less old). The consumer has the opportunity to be part of choosing what food is grown. People have an opportunity to establish a connection with the land that many people feel they have lost. Consumers get high quality food at a low price. Consumers concerned about the environment can be part of the growing of the food in a safe way.

What is the CSA origin? The CSA movement began in Europe and Japan about 30 years ago. CSA's are based on community involvement in the social, economic and environmental conditions of the people. Local consumers formed a partnership with local farmers to produce food in a very environmentally friendly but profitable way. In addition to buying good, healthy (chemical free), wholesome food, the consumer groups were also very concerned or involved in the total welfare of the community and especially people who did not have an adequate food supply. These groups formed food distribution networks so everyone could share in the food bounty produced by the local farmers.

This concept began in the United States in the mid-80's. It grew to about 500 CSA farms by the mid-90's and reached 1,000 today. It is estimated more than 100,000 people are being fed by CSAs.. The U. S. trend is for the farmers to organize the CSA with the goal

of adding adequate value to food production from a few acres so they can make an acceptable living. Many CSA's have 200 to 300 shareholders with some in the 600 to 800 range and a few approaching 1000 shareholders.

How are CSA's organized? Typically, there are three groups involved: farmers, core group and consumers. The *farmers* develop the annual garden plan, grow and harvest the crops. The *core group* is about 5 to10 members, which include farmers and consumers, that are responsible for the distribution, promotion, fiscal arrangements, legal issues, etc of the organization. *Consumers* (shareholders) include all the people who purchase a membership or share in the CSA. The shareholders underwrite the harvest for the entire season.

There are four basic types of CSA's ranging from single farmer subscription to community based and focus.

1. Subscription or farmer-driven. The farmer organizes the CSA and makes most of the decisions. The shareholder or subscriber (member) is not involved in the farm management or production decisions. This model is becoming the most popular.
2. Shareholder or consumer-driven. Consumers organize the CSA and hire a farmer to grow what they want. The consumers make most of the decisions. This model is found more frequently in the Northeast. This could be a community-based group, church, regional food bank or a group of citizens wanting to eat healthy and wholesome fresh fruits and vegetables.
3. Farmer cooperative or alliance. A farmer driven CSA comprised of two or more farmers who supply the CSA shareholders or consumers. In most cases, this allows a wider variety of products of fruits and vegetables plus including eggs, milk, dairy, poultry and meat, even cut flowers, potted plants, and bedding plants resulting in a year around supply of food and products.
4. Farmer-consumer cooperative. The farmer and consumer co-own land and other resources and work together to produce the food. This is very much of a community effort.

What are some of the unique features of a CSA? Generally the food is organically grown. However, many of the farmers only use organic practices, but are not organically certified. Food wholesomeness, freshness, and chemical free is a higher priority than price which is generally the lowest priority. No herbicides, pesticides or artifical fertilizers are used that could affect water quality or leave toxic residues on the food. Members (farmers and consumers) feel a real commitment to protecting and the proper tending of the environment. CSA's give consumers the unique chance to choose how their food is grown. Consumers can participate in the preparing, planting, cultivation, growing, harvesting, and distribution of the crop. CSA is about the community. Some CSA's address important community issues of feeding the low income and poor people while others are part of a regional food bank. Some CSA's are formed by church groups or other community-based organizations to serve their goals and objectives. CSA's are about family and fun. Most CSA's have family days, festivals, and other social gatherings. Others are very family worker-based.

The following two quotes help explain the purpose and role of community supported agriculture. CSA's use the wholelistic conservation approach as stated in Sharing the Harvest... "Joining together in community supported agriculture is another step towards nurturing the interdependence among humans, the soil, and plants and other creatures." Also, "Is the CSA concept worth the trouble?" "Yes, it is significant to be involved—even a little--with growing food in a healthy way and seeing it through from ground to the kitchen."

How does a farmer start a CSA? A farmer needs to be known for quality products and must understand the consumer needs. A customer base must initially be established through Farmer's Markets, community groups, church groups, and neighbors or a combination of these. Many resources are available on how to organize, plan, and operate a CSA. Each CSA is unique. It is described by Elizabeth Henderson, co-author of "Sharing the Harvest"..."like having a baby—your unleash biological and social forces that may take you in directions you never expected. The are many common elements but each birth is unique." Resources are cited at the end of this note on how to organize, plan and operate a CSA. Here are some pointers from experienced CSA farmers:

1. Start small by growing 4 to5 of your favorite crops and marketing them at several local and nearby Farmers' Market for a couple of years to become familiar with production, marketing and customer techniques. One can increase the number of crops and packaging techniques each year.
2. Research and plan the CSA concept for at least 18 months before beginning.
3. Marketing is the more important than the production side of a CSA or a Farmers' Market and needs to be well understood.
4. You need an outlet to market your surplus food when operating a CSA such as a Farmers' Market or a food bank.
5. MOST IMPORTANT DECISION: Choosing the level of technology that is appropriate for you, your skills, and preferred lifestyle is one of the most important decisions you have to make.
6. A strong "core group" for policy, work, and communications from the farmer side and/or the consumer side is needed to guide the CSA unless it is a subscription only CSA.
7. A CSA of 40 members covers the cost of production, marketing and distribution, but leaves no living expenses for the farmer. A 100 member CSA will only provide income for a minimal level of living to the farmer.

What makes a CSA a Success? These tips are from a survey of experienced CSA operators.

1. Talk to other CSA farmers;
2. Start small;
3. Be prepared to work very hard;
4. Try to set up a core group;
5. Research consumer base in area;
6. Depend on many marketing outlets;
7. Try to carry on through the winter; and

8. Cooperate with other farmers.

Source: Cognition, Summer 1997, Vol. 21.No.3

Why do CSA's fail? The following pitfalls have been set forth as reasons why a CSA will fail for the benefit of those just starting out. These are:

1. Tendency of the farmer being to much production orientated and not enough consumer-orientated.
2. Farmer is not flexible enough in addressing the needs of members.
3. CSA is not large enough to supply the farmer's income need and the farmer's time is spent on other ventures.
4. There are few sources to obtain other food produced in a socially responsible manner, like organic meat, to expand the CSA.
5. Farmers are still undercharging for what they produce. Prices are set by what the market will bear rather than the actual costs of production which does not communicate the true needs of the farmer to the consumer. Resource material listed below has this information on pricing.
6. CSA's need to involve the shareholders to retain them.
7. Farmers' are not open to different opportunities.
8. Farmers are afraid to join together to provide more variety in vegetables, meats, dairy, and eggs which strengthens the CSA.
9. Consumers do not get sufficient information about the vegetables, preparation, and demonstrations.
10. Farmers providing too much food each time and too much variety.

Where is there more information? It is not a question of where do I get the information but what information do I want or need to look at. There is a tremendous amount of written material currently available from non profit, governmental agencies and farmers. There are three principle sources of information. CSA farmers and CSA coordinators, books and publications, and web sites. A list of some of those currently available is shown below.

Resource Material

CSA Farms in the United States 1999-2000 (A list of about 1,000 farms .), USDA Sustainable Network and Alternative Farming Information System Center (See web site below)

Sharing the Harvest: A Guide To Community Supported Agriculture, Elizabeth Henderson and Robyn Van En, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, White River Junction, VT, 800-639-409

Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, 800-516-7797
www.prairienet.org/psca
www.biodynamics.com/csa.html
chat room csa-L@prairienet.org

California Certified Organic Farmers
www.ccof.org

Future Harvest/Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, 301-405-8762

Resource Guide for Producers and Organizers, Iowa State University, 515-294-0887

Community Supported Agriculture, Appropriate Technology for Rural Areas (ATTRA), A collection of papers, articles and publications.
800-346-9140
www.attra.org

USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), 202-720-5203
www.sare.org

USDA' Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC), 301-504-6559
www.nal.usda.gov/afsic or afsic@nal.usda.gov for personal requests

National Organic Growers
North American Direct Farmers Marketing Association

Iowa Network for Community Agriculture

Madison Area CSA Coalition, 608-226-0300 ext. 204
www.wisc.edu/cias/macsac

The Michael Fields Institute (Upper Midwest), 262-642-3303
mfai@mfai.org

Northeast Organic Food and Farm Alliance, 810-632-7952
hnccinc@ismi.net
www.moffa.org

Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society, 701-883-4304
tpnpsas@drservices.com
www.npasa.org

Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association, 614-267-3663
Oeffa@iwaynet.net
www.greenlink.org/oeffa

Oregon Tilth, 503-738-0690

Robyn Van En Center, Wilson College, 717-264-4141, ext 3247

Sustainable Earth, 765-463-9366
sbonney@iquest.net

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (Southern Region), 501-587-0888
Ssfarm@juno.com

Tilth Producers, 206-442-7620

Just Food (NY) 212-6771602

Madison Area CSA Coalition
606-226-0300
www.wisc.edu/cias/macsac

USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and state land grant universities state and local extension offices under Federal government in your phone book.

Prepared by James A. Maetzold, National Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism Leader, USDA/NRCS, October 2000.

D. Community Supported Agriculture

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Community Supported Agriculture
NRCS Information Sheet
Reproduce as needed
Available by calling, 1-888-LANDCARE

Community Supported Agriculture
This fourteen-page discusses community supported agriculture and list of resources.
Available online at: http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/csa.html

Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture
By Elizabeth Henderson and Robyn Van En
Chelsea Green Publishing
This book presents information on the goals and focus of CSA. It explains how to get started and organized and what types of food to grow. It also provides various CSA models.
Available from publisher at:
P.O. Box 428
White River Junction, VT 05001
Ph: 1-800-639-4099.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Resources for Producers
Compiled by Mary Gold, October 1999
Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, NAL
This publication provides information on and resources on CSA.
Available online at: www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa
Ph: (301) 504-6559
Email: mgold@nal.usda.gov

Community Supported Agriculture: Making the Connection
University of California Cooperative Extension/Placer County
This workbook provides information and examples of CSA farms. It contains several worksheets that can be used or modified.
Available from:
11477 E Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603
Ph: (916) 889-7385

Local Harvest
This website allows consumers all over the country to search for community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers' markets, farm stands, and U-pick farms in their area.
www.localharvest.org

Letter from Wild Onion Farm,
Published in Growing for Market , April 1998
Available in Resource Manual

CSA's that Quit
By Elizabeth Henderson, published in Organic Farms, Folks &Foods, March/April 1997
Available in Resource Manual

Farming Well At Eatwell Farm: Start-up CSA Brings Stability to Truck Farm
By Pam Kasey, published in Farmer to Farmer, Spring 1997
Available in Resource Manual

Filling the Boxes-Designing a CSA Crop Plan
By Jim Leap, Published in "The Cultivar," winter 1997
Available in Resource Manual

A CSA Production Planning Tool
By Stephen F. Moore. Published in "Biodynamics Farming and Gardening in the 21st Century," September/October 1997
Available in Resource Manual

EightTips frm the Experts to Make Your CSA Project a Success
By Amunda Salm, published in "Cognition," Summer 1997

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): A Value Added Alternative Enterprise
NRCS/USDA
Available in Resource Manual.

INFORMATION SHEET

USDA NRCS

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

AE-2

Alternative Enterprises – Community-Supported Agriculture

How to provide healthful food to local consumers and strengthen your bottom line

What is Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA)?

Unlike conventional food marketing systems in which farmers sell to wholesalers or other intermediaries, Community-Supported Agriculture allows farmers to sell "shares" of their fresh fruit and vegetable production directly to local consumers over a growing season. Consumers pay farmers in advance of production for weekly delivery of fresh, locally grown produce at a later date. Some CSA's supplement shares of fruits and vegetables with meat, eggs, poultry, or other value-added items purchased from other farmers. Depending on the CSA, customers can pay for their share in cash, or they can work on the farm in exchange for reduced share costs.

CSA's can be organized in different ways:

Subscription Farming: Growers sell "shares" of their production directly to consumers, but maintain control over all production and management decisions.

Shareholder Driven: A group of consumers organizes a CSA and seeks out farmers to grow the produce of their choice.

Cooperatives: The grower and the consumers jointly own the land and production resources, work together to produce the food, and share in the management decisions.

Why Community-Supported Agriculture?

Under this direct marketing approach, consumers get the freshest seasonal food possible, often at reduced prices and better quality, while gaining greater control over the way their food is produced. Many CSA's produce food using organic or low-input production systems that consumers increasingly demand.

Meanwhile, CSA's provide small-scale farmers with profitable production opportunities that return 100 percent of the consumer's dollar. And because consumers pay for their produce in advance, farmers have income well before harvest, reducing the need for operating loans. Meanwhile, consumers share much of the production risk with the grower.

What Should You Consider?

Natural Resource Assessment: Are your land, soil, and climate suitable for quality fresh fruit or vegetable production demanded by local consumers? Do you have enough acreage to generate sufficient income? Studies show that CSA's need at least 100 members in order to maintain a minimal income; how much land that requires depends on what is being grown.

Labor Supply: CSA's are labor intensive. Do you have access to an adequate seasonal labor supply? If not, will shareholders be willing to provide labor? Do you have the time to devote to planning and implementing a CSA?

Knowledge and Experience: Growing fruits and vegetables differs greatly from producing commodity-type crops; it requires different equipment, facilities, and production practices. Do you have the know-how? Research on CSA's suggests that to be successful, growers need at least 18 months to plan their CSA and 2 to 4 years of experience growing produce for farmers' markets or other outlets.

Financing: How will you finance your start-up costs before you've built your membership base?

Customer Base and Marketing: Are you located close enough to your customer base to sell enough shares to keep your business profitable? Have you developed a clientele and reputation through sales at local and regional farmers' markets? What local organizations or businesses can you

partner with to help market your CSA to consumers and promote its growth? Some CSA's offer variable rates to low-income consumers.

Legal Matters: What unique insurance needs might your CSA have? What are your legal obligations and liabilities under your proposed CSA venture?

Where To Get Help

There are a number of information resources that can help you get started on your new venture. A few of those resources are listed below. For more information, contact your USDA Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council area office. For a national listing of RC&D offices, see http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RCCD/rc&dstate.html on the web or call your local U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center (in the phone book, under "Federal Government").

For a national listing of alternative enterprises and agritourism liaisons, see http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RESS/econ/ressd.htm.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program and its Sustainable Agriculture Network, in collaboration with the National Agricultural Library's Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, has created a new resource dedicated to providing farmers with information on Community-Supported Agriculture. For comprehensive information on planning, developing, and marketing CSA's and for other sources of information, see http://www.sare.org on the web or call (202) 720-5203.

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)

ATTRA offers extensive information on initiating and maintaining successful CSA's and provides links to CSA organizations that can help you. See http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/csa.html on the web or call (800) 346-9140. ATTRA is sponsored by USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

University of California Cooperative Extension and UC Small Farm Center

The University of California publishes a CSA how-to manual, *Community Supported Agriculture...Making the Connection,* that is available for purchase. Call 530-889-7385 or write UCCE, 11477 E Ave., Auburn, CA 95603.

Farming Alternatives Program (FAP), Cornell University

FAP produces a step-by-step workbook to help you plan and evaluate a new enterprise. The workbook, *Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises,* can be ordered by calling (607) 255-9832. Also see http://www.cals.cornell.edu/dept/ruralsoc/fap/fap.html on the web.

For additional copies of this information sheet, AE-2, call 1-888-LANDCARE or see the website at http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RESS/econ/ressd.htm.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

800-346-9140

ATTRA
Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

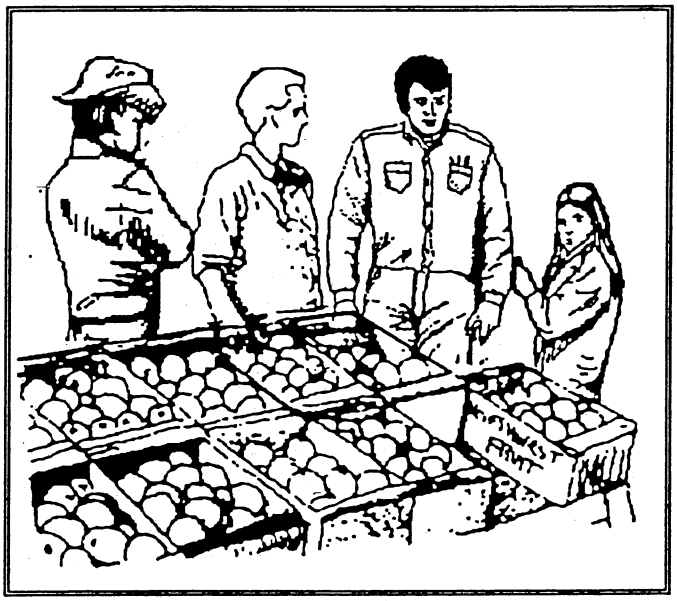
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SERIES

ATTRA is the national sustainable agriculture information center funded by the USDA's Rural Business -- Cooperative Service.

Abstract: *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is both a marketing technique and a way of life. CSAs across the country are helping farmers make ends meet. This publication discusses the basics of CSAs, how they work, and how to get started. An increasingly important problem of CSAs is how to retain shareholders, and this is also discussed. Numerous organizations, publications, and websites are listed.*

Prepared by ATTRA Technical Specialist
Lane Greer — January 1999

Introduction



Community Supported Agriculture or CSA is quickly becoming a direct marketing alternative for small-scale growers. In a CSA system, the farmer grows food for a group of shareholders (or subscribers) who pledge to buy a portion of the farm's crop that season. This arrangement gives growers up-front cash to finance their operation and higher prices for produce, since the middleman has been eliminated. Besides receiving a weekly box or bag of fresh, high-quality produce, shareholders also know that they're directly supporting a local farm (1). CSAs also allow shareholders to re-establish a connection with the land that many people feel they have lost.

A 1992 study on CSAs found that most had between 35 and 200 members, and the average CSA farm was about 35 acres (2). A typical box of food held 5-10 pounds of food per week, or enough for 2 or 3 people. Prices ran from $10 to $35 per week, with the average share costing $346 for 22 weeks of food. (The range for memberships was between $225 and $500.)

The average number of members in a CSA has increased in the past few years. Now, 200-400 member groups are common, with more than one farmer providing the food.

CSA costs seem reasonable. One detailed three-year study showed sharers would have paid 37% more at their supermarket for convention-ally grown food (2). However, for most subscribers saving money is a secondary consideration.

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This document is meant to be an overview of the CSA system. It is not a step-by-step guide on how to start a CSA. There is a workbook entitled "Community Supported Agriculture...Making the Connection" that helps farmers plan a CSA from beginning to end. See the **Resources** section at the end of this document for more information.

Origins of CSA

Although the CSA movement began in Europe and Japan 30 years ago, in the U.S., the first couple of CSAs were established only in 1986, in New England. Jan Vander Tuin in Massachusetts and Trauger Groh in New Hampshire created the first CSAs, based on their experience with European models. There are currently about 1000 CSAs in the U.S. and Canada.

What is CSA?

There are four types of CSAs (3):

1) **Subscription or farmer-driven.** The farmer organizes the CSA and makes most of the management decisions. The shareholder or subscriber is not very involved in the farm. This kind of CSA is quickly becoming the most common.

2) **Shareholder or consumer-driven.** Consumers organize the CSA and hire the farmer to grow what they want. Most of the decisions are made by the consumers. This model is often used in the Northeast.

3) **Farmer cooperative.** A kind of farmer-driven CSA in which two or more farms pool their resources to supply customers. This may allow the CSA to offer a wider variety of products (e.g., fruit, eggs, meat, milk). "With such an arrangement a small farmer wouldn't have to devote space to land-extensive, low-value crops such as pumpkins or sweet corn and a larger farm wouldn't have to dedicate time to labor intensive crops like carrots or herbs" (3).

4) **Farmer-consumer cooperative.** The farmer and consumer co-own land and other resources and work together to produce food.

In all CSAs, the farmer develops a crop plan and a budget, which details costs for a growing season, including fair wages for the farmers. These may then be studied and approved by the CSA membership. Costs are divided among the number of shares to be sold. Sometimes a voluntary sliding scale is used, so that some higher-income households may pay more per share than lower-income households (2).

Getting Started

To get a CSA up and running, there are many factors to consider besides production. The first issue to address concerns marketing–How does one find subscribers?

It is often said that the best advertising is word-of-mouth, but this is especially true for finding CSA subscribers. People who already know and trust the grower will tend to be the first ones to participate. As the CSA grows, it is the subscribers who will do the most recruiting in a successful operation.

Other good places to advertise include fairs, associational gatherings, health food stores, and Earth Day celebrations. It is important to do as much recruiting and marketing as possible during the winter.

A good way to find subscribers is to focus on a group of people who are located close together, like a neighborhood or a place of business. Civic groups, schools, and churches are often fertile ground for CSAs. People who support CSAs also tend to support environmental causes, so focusing on groups like the Sierra Club usually pays off.

Ideas for Ongoing Marketing:

- Offer discounts to shareholders who recruit others.
- Offer a free share to any member who can recruit 10 families.
- Give T-shirts to shareholders, or tote bags. That way they can advertise without ever opening their mouths.

Printed Materials that Set Realistic Expectations:

It is very important to provide a brochure that explains what CSA is all about and sets realistic expectations for subscribers. The brochure should be as specific as possible, listing vegetables (and other products) that will be offered and approximate harvest times, so that consumers do not expect sweet corn in May or strawberries in August. The cost of the shares, the size of the shares (such as full, half, and seasonal), and delivery times and places are all very important pieces of information.

Often, the expectations of new shareholders are not realistic. As long as this is the case, shareholders will be dissatisfied with the CSA experience. What can CSA farmers do to manage people's expectations (5)?

1. Hold on-farm meetings.

2. Provide resource booklets to shareholders when they first sign up. These discuss the concept of risk, introduce the farm, and offer hints on how to store vegetables. There may be a question and answer section that addresses commonly-asked questions.

3. Provide crop lists that include what will be grown and the harvest periods fordifferent vegetables.

4. Develop a calendar of what is happening on the farm, to keep shareholders in touch with it.

5. Provide newsletters that tell about upcoming events, what vegetables are in season, how the weather is affecting the crops, etc. Most CSAs offer some kind of newsletter. This can be a very simple, one-page account of what is currently going on at the farm, or it can be more formal, with several pages that include recipes, surveys, and other pertinent information. Usually, to save money on mailing costs, newsletters (of whatever form) are picked up or delivered with the weekly food box.

   One survey asked members what they would like to read about in the newsletter and found that most people wanted information on vegetables and herbs, recipes, canning and food preservation, and farming decisions and methods (6).

6. Make cookbooks and vegetable identification information available. Members of many CSAs do not know how to prepare unfamiliar vegetables like kohlrabi. If the CSA has supplied recipes for cooking these kinds of things, there will be fewer complaints from subscribers. A few well-established CSAs

Member's Handbook

Watershed Organic Farm in Princeton, NJ, offers a member's handbook that addresses many
commonly asked questions and helps members have realistic expectations (4). The subjects covered in the handbook include:

- What to do when you get to the farm (parking, containers, weighing food, the exchange table, information about you-pick crops, etc.)
- Splitting a share.
- Children on the farm- keep your eye on them at all times.
- Safety on the farm- electric fencing, rodent holes, tractors and equipment.
- Organic pesticides and how they work.
- Volunteering.
- Information about the Veggie Hot Line.
- How to care for produce (for each vegetable).

Members Do Their Share

The Genesee Valley Organic CSA Project requires work as part of the contribution for every share. This concept has worked well for them. They have been in business for seven seasons and membership has grown every year. Their share price is low compared to other CSAs, and they provide members with 7-10 pounds of vegetables and fruit per week.

For each share, a member works three four-hour shifts at the farm and transports food back in to the city, and two two-hour shifts on distribution. At the farm, members pick most of the food for the CSA and then help with whatever work is most critical - weeding, hoeing, sorting, or washing. The farmers do not ask them to do skilled work or to use any machinery (7).

have even printed their own cookbooks. (See the **Resources** section for more information.)

7. Offer trial periods, where subscribers sign up for a month or so. Or, when regular subscribers go on vacation, ask them to have a neighbor pick up their share. This will introduce new members to the CSA concept.

orking Members:

Other decisions that have to be made include who will harvest and when. In some CSAs, members do not work at all. Often, however, CSAs offer two options - a higher fee for non-workers and a lower fee for a specific number of work hours per season. One CSA offers a 50 percent discount to shareholders by giving themthe opportunity to work three hours a week during the growing season (8). There are many ways to have work-share programs; another CSA asks shareholders to work three four-hour days for a discounted share price (8).

A recent survey asked members what work they would prefer to do (6). They were more interested in: recruiting new members, volunteering to work on the farm, and attending festivals and field days. They were less interested in providing a distribution site, ing newsletters, and helping with the anning, organizing, and budgeting for the farm. (Note: Only one study has been performed in this area, and these results may not be true for every CSA.)

Production:

CSA production systems require tremendous diversity. The most daunting task of a CSA farmer is producing a consistent supply of a range of fruits and vegetables (1). This means more work for the farmer in the planning and planting phases. Running a CSA may mean having more kinds of equipment and a greater knowledge of basic growing practices for each of the different crops (9).

Before planting a single seed in the ground, the grower should think carefully about the crop plan. After a crop list has been drawn up, appropriate planting times have to be considered. The planting times need to take into account the harvest period for each crop, so that successive planting can be integrated into the crop plan. For example, the grower will probably need to have several plantings of sweet corn to ensure a constant supply, but pumpkins might need to be planted only once.

After the crop plan has been drawn up, the next step is to decide how much of each crop to plant. According to Jered Lawson, who coordinates the Community Alliance with Family Farmers' CSA West project, an acre of ground will produce crops for about 20 to 30 shares (1). Jim Leap, who is also with CSA West, suggests adding 30%-50% to planting rates, to account for crop losses (1). Says Leap, "I think the best

advice I can give to entry-level farmers is to keep your crop plan fairly simple in your first year, and plan on doing one or two farmers' markets to handle the excess" (1). He also advises that new farmers should not jump into a CSA program. Running a CSA requires knowledge of growing and production skills which can only come with experience. For the first year or two, fine-tune the production system and sell at farmers' markets. "Then start with a small group of shareholders – 25 is a good goal for the first CSA season – and build from there as your skills and confidence grow" (1).

To meet the needs of shareholders, remember to (5):

1. Supply lots of the "basic" vegetables (things like green beans, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, squash, and corn). New varieties should be offered as compliments to, rather than substitutes for, the basics.

2. Extend the season. Starting transplants in cold frames or high tunnels will guarantee earlier produce and a longer growing season. For more information, ask for ATTRA's publication *Season Extension Techniques for Market Gardeners.*

3. Use staggered plantings, in order to offer shareholders a wide variety for a long period of time.

4. Add specialty items, like berries or flowers.

Pick-up and Delivery:

There are several options for produce delivery. For CSA farms that are located hours away from a large city, delivery to a central area is often the best way to go. Many farms deliver to a public park and ask that subscribers be there during a specified time (maybe an hour or two long) to pick up their food. CSA farmers often invite other organic producers to sell their products at this time, creating a mini-farmers' market.

Another option is to leave bags or boxes at a place of business, like a health food store. The stores may charge the farmer, but often they won't because this increases traffic in their place of business. The store owner may even place the CSA produce in a cooler.

If many of the subscribers are located in one neighborhood, delivery to that neighborhood makes good sense. Or, the neighborhood can elect a representative who will pick up all the boxes/bags at the farm and distribute them later. This representative can change every week or remain the same.

Delivering to individual homes can be done, but it involves a lot of work. If there are only a few shareholders in a small town, this may be justified and appropriate. The concerns associated with home delivery are not only the time it takes, but also what to do with the produce if the subscriber isn't home. Leaving it on a front porch is often satisfactory, but "sun-kissed" produce can be unsatisfactory, too. For farms that are located conveniently, pick-up at the farm is probably best. This saves hours of delivery time and arranging for deliveries.

Many CSA farmers harvest the produce and apportion it among the shareholders. A newer, less labor-intensive idea has been used by many CSAs who have had really good luck with it. This is to have all the produce laid out in bulk, and to let the shareholders package it themselves. Some CSAs have signs telling customers how much they can take, with bags or boxes of the appropriate size to fill, others have scales customers can use.

Another option that has worked surprisingly well is not to place limits on anything, and to allow subscribers to take what they want of each thing. This allows each customer to take what he or she likes best and leave the rest. Allowing shareholders to pick out what they want alleviates two of the biggest complaints subscribers have: that of having too much food and having too many "weird" vegetables.

Farm Profile - Tuscaloosa CSA

The Tuscaloosa CSA in Alabama has 100 subscribers and is run by Jean Mills and Carol Eichelberger. They sell produce for eight months out of the year and focus on cultivars not often sold in grocery stores.

Shares are sold the winter prior to the growing season. The cost of each share is $325. This money purchases tools, seeds, and supplies; maintains equipment, greenhouse and distribution shed; pays administrative costs, and pays an additional laborer during peak planting and harvesting periods.

Shareholders complete a potential crop list to help Jean and Carol decide what to grow. To determine how much to plant, they first settle on a serving size: three to four squash, one head of broccoli, etc. Then they determine how many servings they want to provide a member each week, taking into account what and how much else they expect to be harvesting at the same time, and the length of each crop's growing season.

They grow almost all their crops from seed, starting spring crops in the greenhouse in early January. Plantings are made in successions to stagger harvests and to give members a steady supply of manageable amounts of each crop. Transplants are set out beginning in February, first harvests begin in late March or early April, and the season is wrapped up in late November.

"Managing a large garden with the wide variety of crops and staggered plantings with specific yield requirements is quite a task," says Mills. "The work is very labor intensive."

Shareholders are placed in neighborhood groups of six to nine members. Half of the neighborhoods receive produce on Wednesdays, the other half on Saturdays. This spreads harvesting and distribution out over the week for the gardeners. At 8:00 on the morning of each distribution day, two CSA members come to the farm to help wash, sort, weigh, count and package the produce. Each member is responsible for this task twice during the year. Each neighborhood sends a representative to pick up produce for the entire group.

Jean and Carol try to engender a sense of community among the members. On Sunday afternoons the garden is open for CSA members to come out. The farmers give tours and share recipes, and members are welcome to pick produce. They send out a bi-weekly newsletter with the produce, which is chatty and informal and provides members with a farm report and recipes (10).

Some farms have a credit system. Shareholders use credits to make purchases. They are given a finite number of credits at the beginning of the season and can take whatever they want, up to so many credits per week. Produce that is overly abundant may be worth half a credit, while popular items and those in short supply are worth a full credit (5).

If customers are coming to the farm, there can be some "you-pick" items. The things that work well as you-pick items are labor-intensive things that customers really want and will take the time to pick themselves, like strawberries and green beans. Another idea for on-the-farm pick-up: have a take it or leave it table, where customers can drop off things they don't want and pick up extra bags of things they do want (5).

Setting Prices:

"The biggest contributing factor to CSA burnout and failure is setting the share price too low" (11). Some CSAs offer low prices to attract new customers, but prices that are too low will not sustain the farmer. The idea is to share the risk and support the farmer (11).

A waiting list indicates that people will pay more for a share. If members are complaining about getting too much food or lots of people are splitting shares, the share size is too big (11). Cutting the share size but keeping production levels the same will allow more people to join the CSA and provide additional income for the farmer.

Use one of the methods below to set reasonable prices (11):

1. Sell at market prices.
   Selling at farmers' market prices works best with a subscription CSA.
2. Approximate market value.
   Decide how much a household would normally spend on veggies for a season and price produce accordingly.
3. Calculate your costs.
   This approach takes the most time but gives the best accounting and is well-suited for a shareholding CSA.
4. Use competition to set prices.
   If there is another CSA in the area, you will be somewhat restricted by what they are charging. While you don't want to undercharge, charging a great deal more than the competition may lead to failure, unless your product line is substantially different (huge variety or longer season).

A study conducted at the University of Massachusetts found that CSA shares are underpriced (12). Consumers save $300-1000 per season by subscribing to a CSA. "Figuring that a full share at $400 represents only 6% of the $6500 an average American family spends on food each year and provides the most important component of the diet for five months, CSA is a genuine bargain, especially if it encourages consumers to eat more fresh vegetables and less processed products" (3).

Farm Profile

At Silver Creek Farm in Ohio, the season lasts about 22 weeks. A working person pays $325 and spends eight half-days on the farm working. Non-working members pay $425.

Silver Creek offers not only food shares, but others as well. For instance, the egg, chicken and lamb share allows egg and meat purchases. The sweater share utilizes wool and mohair from the farm's sheep and goats; the knitting is done by an octogenarian. A kid's knitting share involves a how-to-knit class with supplies included. A preserver share allows the use of the on-farm canning shed. A home brewing share teaches members how to make their own beer (13).

Receiving Feedback:

As a CSA develops, one of the best sources of information on crop planning will come directly from subscribers. Casual conversations on pick-up days are a great way to get feedback. Subscriber surveys, which many CSA farmers use, will also give you ideas for modifying your cropping plan (1). Other ways to get feedback (5):

- Use voting sheets. Find out which items shareholders want to be grown.
- Call local grocery stores to see what produce is being bought most often.

- End-of-the-season surveys. Many CSAs use these. Be sure to provide feedback to subscribers on the survey results.

- Provide suggestion/comments box at the pick-up site. Or, have a clipboard for comments.

Increasing Shareholder Retention

Many CSAs have a high turnover rate, losing between 25 and 70 percent of their members each season. For the beginning CSA, a retention rate of 50% is fairly typical (14). A successful CSA should shoot for a retention rate between 75 and 80% by the time it enters its fifth or sixth season (14). CSAs that encourage shareholder participation on the farm have better retention. To maximize shareholder retention (8):

- Make the farm feel like a second home. Have workdays that encourage many members to plant and harvest together. Have several social occasions, like potlucks and harvest celebrations. Hold a wildflower walk or harvest festival. Have rotten tomato fights and "Make the Scariest Scarecrow" contest.

- Get members' kids on your side. Plan events especially for youngsters, such as Bailey and Dennis Stenson's "Earthworm Day". After a short talk on the importance of earthworms to organic farmers, kids get a slice of a 4-foot earthworm-shaped cake and make worms out of PlayDough. Have a few rabbits for cuddling or a play area with toys.

- Remember that many shareholders know next-to-nothing about growing food. To help educate members, provide them with a schedule of when to expect their shares of certain fruits and vegetables.

- Dig out your best recipes. Offer classes on canning and storing.

- Have a cooking demonstration at the pick-up site. This will encourage members to try some of the more unusual vegetables.

- Renew memberships in the fall, rather than waiting until spring.

- Focus on the "Top Eight" vegetables: carrots, lettuce, corn, tomatoes, broccoli, green beans, onions, potatoes. (These may vary slightly in different parts of the country.) Increase the quantity and length of season of these.

- Continue the newsletter during the winter months, to help members stay connected.

- Select varieties for eating quality.

- Grow something different, like cut flowers, mushrooms, and berries.

- Perform end-of-the-year surveys. Use theseto help plan next year's crop. If members are receiving too much kale and too little lettuce, adjust accordingly. Remember, the best information comes from members who are leaving the CSA.

Loans for CSAs

In 1996, the Fund for Conservation and Community Supported Agriculture was created to help CSA farmers buy land and finance capitalimprovements. The fund solicits investments and gifts from people interested in supporting CSAs and makes loans to CSA farms that cannot get financing through conventional means. The fund provides short-term loans rather than money for conventional mortgages that take 20 or 30 years to repay.

For more information, contact:

The Equity Trust Fund
539 Beach Pond Rd.
Voluntown, CT 06384
860-376-6174

Farm Profile of Failed CSA

Guinness McFadden grows 140 acres of organic wine grapes. He also sells wild rice, braided garlic, wild blackberry jam, sun-dried tomatoes, herbs and bay leaf wreaths.

In the late 80's, he attempted to start a CSA on 25 acres. His problems included mismanagement and poor judgment. He sums it up by saying that he ran a 25-acre garden instead of a 25-acre vegetable farm. His problems included trying to start out with 500 families and a monthly payment schedule that allowed people to drop out easily.

Guinness charged $35 a week for a bushel of food and asked for a $280 deposit for the first 8 weeks. After that, he billed by the month, in advance. If the subscriber was going away, she could call the farm and the farm would carry over her subscription.

Guinness used an 800 number for feedback, and he received so many complaints about the amount of food that he halved the amount and lowered the price to $25 a week. The subscribers didn't mind the price; they just didn't like the waste.

He gave subscribers whatever was growing at the time, growing 80 varieties of vegetables. He delivered produce by driving 3 hours into San Francisco. He built a packing shed and bought an old refrigerator truck to serve as a cooler. Delivery drivers were paid $3 for each basket delivered and given a basket for themselves.

There was a weekly newsletter that provided recipes and information on what would be available the following week. They also sold non-hormone-fed beef and lamb.

Guinness ran the CSA for one year and then quit. He was able to make a lot more money by focusing on value-added items (16).

The Future of CSA

CSA will continue to be an expanding marketing channel for small-scale producers. As more and more farms experiment with CSA, more information will become available that will benefit those just starting out. There are weaknesses of the current CSA system: the tendency for the farmer to be production-oriented rather than consumer-oriented; not enough flexibility in addressing the needs of members; CSAs are not able to supply the farmer's entire income, so more time is spent on other marketing ventures. Also, there are few avenues to obtain other food produced in a cially responsible manner, like organic meat. rmers are still undercharging for what they produce, and "relying on a price derived from what the market will bear, rather than actual costs of production, makes it impossible for the consumers to know the true needs of farmers" (15).

CSAs should strive to involve their shareholders, not only to increase retention, but also to develop a sense of community. CSA farms should remain open to opportunities for expansion, like raising free-range chickens and tree fruits. Another way to diversity is to form a cooperative with other farms, so that the CSA can supply all of the community's needs. Consumers are asking for information on things like cooking and canning. CSAs should be able to provide workshops and demonstrations on these topics.

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Lee, Andrew. No date. Community-Supported Agriculture: Sample Budgets. p. 4.

Moore, Stephen F. 1997. A CSA production planning tool. BioDynamics. September-October. p. 14-17.

Salm, Amunda. 1997. Eight tips from the experts to make your CSA project a success. Cognition. Summer. p. 23-24.

Resources

Organizations

BiodynamicAssociation
PO Box 550
Kimberton, PA 19442
800-516-7797
www.biodynamics.com/bd/bdlinks.htm
Provides list of all CSAs in the U.S. and Canada. Also has brochure "Introduction to Community

Supported Farms and Farm Supported Communities".

Center for Sustainable Living
Wilson College
1015 Philadelphia Ave.
Chambersburg, PA 17201

Wilson College has several resources for farmers who want to start a CSA. Brochures to hand out to prospective members are available for 10 cents each; an information packet costs $2; an 88-page CSA handbook is $10; a 15-minute video describing CSA to prospective members is $10; a slide show with 22 text slides is $12.50; a slide show with photos taken at CSA farms is $25.

Community Supported Agriculture of North America
818 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 1800
Washington, DC 20006

Network for encouraging and supporting CSAs. $21 membership includes quarterly newsletter "The Seasonal News".

CSA of North America (CSANA)
RR 3, Box 85
Great Barrington, MA 01230
www.umass.edu/umext/CSA

Directory of CSAs for $5.

CSA West
CAFF
PO Box 363
Davis, CA 95617
916-756-7857
http://www.caff.org/caff/programs/
Email: csawest@caff.org

This group strives to expand the exchange of new ideas on running CSAs in the West. Provides directory of California CSAs, resource packets on start-up, and runs a start-up workshop.

Iowa Network for Community Agriculture
John Hall, Secretary
PO Box 1452
Ames, IA 50014
515-231-4421

Sponsors statewide networking events and workshops and provides information about CSA.

Just Food
Riverside Side, #15D
New York, NY 10025-5287
212-666-2168
Contact: Sarah Milstein or Kathy Lawrence
Email: milstein@pipeline.com

Just Food helps establish CSAs in the New York City area.

Land Stewardship Project
2200 Fourth Street
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
612-653-0618

Publishes a directory of CSA farms in Minnesota and western Wisconsin.

Madison Area CSA Coalition (MACSAC)
Wisconsin Rural Development Center
125 Brookwood Dr.
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572
608-437-5971
Contact: Karen Foley-Strauss

MACSAC maintains an updated directory of CSA farms serving the Madison, WI area and sponsors several CSA-related events each year, including conferences and workshops.

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
W2493 County Road ES
East Troy, WI 53120
414-642-3303

Provides CSA Midwest Regional Directory (freebooklet) and holds workshops.

Publications

University of California Cooperative Extension, Placer County and UC Small Farm Center. 1995. Community Supported Agriculture...Making the Connection. 198 pages, binder format.

The best single manual you can buy. This takes a potential grower through the process involved in starting a CSA, including designing the CSA, recruiting members and marketing, creating production and harvest plans, setting share prices, and legal issues. Available for $25 plus $5 shipping/handling from:

UCCE
11477 E Ave.
Auburn, CA 95603
916-889-7385
Make checks payable to UC Regents.

Cohn, Gerry (ed.) 1994. Community Supported Agriculture Conference, Publication SA-002. UC Agricultural Publications, Oakland, CA. 37 p.

Proceedings from a December 1993 UC SAREP-Small Farm Center CSA conference. Available for $8 from:

UC Agricultural Publications
6701 San Pablo Ave.
Oakland, CA 94608-1239
510-641-2431
Make check payable to UC Regents.

Colorado State University. No date. Community Supported Agriculture: The Producer/Consumer Partnership. Publication XCM-189. Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Resource Center. 10 p. *Available free on-line at <http://www.colostate.edu/depts/coopext or for $2 from:*

CERC
Colorado Sate University
115 General Services Bldg.
Ft. Collins, CO 80523-4061
970-491-6198
www.colostate.edu/depts/coopext

Kelvin, Rochelle. 1994. Community Supported Agriculture on the Urban Fringe: Case Study and Survey. #RU-94/01. Rodale Institute, Kutztown, PA.

Results from a study that examined the growth of CSA and the potential for CSA farms to help bridge the gap between rural and urban communities. Highlights some of the barriers and opportunities facing CSA farmers today. Available for $4 from:

Karin Clifford
Rodale Institute Research Center
611 Siegfriedale Road
Kutztown, PA 19530
Make checks payable to Rodale Institute.

Gilman, Steve (ed.) 1997. 1997 CSA Farm Network. CSA Farm Network, Stillwater, NY.

A collection of farm profiles and research reports. Articles about CSAs that failed and why members don't renew. Includes a directory of CSAs in the Northeast and a list of resources for CSA farmers nationwide. Available for $12 from:

CSA Farm Network
130 Ruckytucks Rd.
Stillwater, NY 12170
518-583-4613
Make checks payable to Gilman–CSANET.

Gradwell, Shelly, et al. No date. Community Supported Agriculture: Local Food Systems for Iowa. Iowa State Extension Bulletin Pm-1962.

Available on-line at http: or from:

ISU Extension Distribution
119 Printing and Publications
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-3171
515-294-5247

Gregson, Bob and Bonnie. 1996. Rebirth of the Small Family Farm. IMF Assoc., Vashon Island, WA. 64 p.

A handbook for starting a successful organic farm based on the CSA model. Available for $9.95 from:

IMF Associates
PO Box 2542
Vashon Island, WA 98070
Make checks payable to IMF.

Groh, Trauger and Steven S.H. McFadden. 1998. Farms of Tomorrow Revisited. Bio-Dynamic Literature, Kimberton, PA. 310 p.

The 1998 edition is an updated version of Farms of Tomorrow, printed in 1990. The new edition contains information on economic, spiritual, and legal questions faced by CSAs, the development of community, the role of animals in a CSA, and farmer observations. Available for $21 from:

The Wisdom Conservancy
Merriam Hill Educ. Center
148 Merriam Hill Rd.
Greenville, NY 03048

DeMuth, Suzanne. 1993. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide.

Available from:

National Agricultural Library
10301 Baltimore Blvd.
Beltsville, MD 20705-2351
301-504-6559

Maynard, Donald M. and George J. Hochmuth. 1997. Knott's Handbook for Vegetable Growers, 4th ed. John Wiley & Sons, New York. 582 p.

Information on yields, row spacing, crops, nutritional content of vegetables. Widely available.

Coleman, Eliot. 1995. The New Organic Grower: A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Gardener. Chelsea Green, Post Mills, VT. 340 p.

Excellent information for market gardeners. Widely available.

Coleman, Eliot. 1992. The New Organic Grower's Four-Season Harvest. Chelsea Green, Post Mills, VT. 212 p.

Season extension techniques. Widely available.

Resources: (continued)

Johnny's seed catalog.

Provides information on yields, row spacings, and harvest periods. Available free from:

Johnny's Selected Seeds
Foss Hill Rd.
Albion, ME 04910
207-437-9294

Cookbooks

O'Connor, Nancy. Rolling Prairie Cookbook.

Written by a nutrition education for the Rolling Prairie CSA in Lawrence, Kansas. Not a regional cookbook; it's a fresh produce cookbook. Contains over 130 recipes. 220 pages. Send $17.95 to:

GFM Books
PO Box 3747
Lawrence, KS 66046

Stern, David and Elizabeth Henderson. The CSA Foodbook.

A guide to eating, cooking and storing 70 vegetables and small fruits. Compiled by members of the Genesee Valley Organic CSA. The book is $9 (with looseleaf binder), $8 (unbound), and a 100-recipe supplement costs $2. Shipping costs $2.75 per book. Available from:

Elizabeth Henderson
PO Box 88
Rose, NY 14542

Newsletters

The Community Farm
3480 Potter Rd.
Bear Lake, MI 49614
616-889-3216
fsfarm@mufn.org

Quarterly newsletter. $20/year.

Growing for Market
PO Box 3747
Lawrence, KS 66046
913-841-2559

Growing for Market is a monthly newsletter that regularly features issues of interest to CSA farmers. Available for $27/year.

Software for CSA Planning

The CSA Planning Chart is a computerized spreadsheet that allows growers to calculate how many of each crop to grow for a specified number of users. Information includes yield per row foot, row spacing, planting intervals, number of pounds given per share, and the number of weeks the crop can be harvested. The Chart is available on disk for $15 and a self-addressed envelope with two 32-cent stamps. Specify whether you want IBM or Apple format, and choose either EXCEL, LOTUS, or QUATROPRO. Contact:

CSA Works
115 Bay Rd.
Hadley, MA 01035

Websites

http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs/Farm0p.html

Iowa State University's web site. Provides access to several publications, including *CSA: Local Food Systems for Iowa* (Pm-1962), and *Statewide List of Iowa CSA Farms and Organizers* (Pm-1963).

http://www.wisc.edu/cias/pubs/resbrief/021.html

Maintained by the University of Wisconsin-Madison

http://www.massgrown.org/consumer/csa.htm

Listing of CSAs in Massachusetts

http://www.mtn.org/iasa/csalist.htm

CSAs in the Midwest

http://www.umass.edu/umext/csa/

CSA of North America (maintained by University of Massachusetts Extension)

http://wwwmetrokc.gov/farms/csa.htm

Listing of CSAs in the Puget Sound, WA area

http://www.misa.umn.edu/csag.html

Maintained by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture

http://www.state.me.us/agriculture/marketprod/communityag.htm

Listing of Maine's CSAs and other links

http://www.igc.org/foodfirst/fian/csa.htm

Lists examples of produce packages available from CSAs; benefits of CSA; listing of CSAs in the San Francisco Bay area. Maintained by the Institute for Food and Development Policy and CSA-West

Resources: (continued)

istserver

CSA-L@prairienet.org

CSA-L is a free public service, offered by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and is an e-mail discussion list for networking on CSA topics. To join this discussion group, send an e-mail message to listproc@prairienet.org with *subscribe CSA-L Firstname Lastname* in the message.

CSA-L also has a FAQ at <http://www.prairienet.org/pcsa/csa-l.html> that answers basic questions about CSA.

Video

"It's Not Just About Vegetables", an 18-minute video interviewing core group of first-season CSA at farm.

Available for $35 from CSANA (see address above).

Prepared by Lane Greer
ATTRA Technical Specialist

February, 1999

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SHARING THE HARVEST

A Guide to Community Supported Agriculture

Elizabeth Henderson with Robyn Van En

Foreword by Joan Dye Gussow

CHELSEA GREEN PUBLISHING COMPANY
White River Junction, Vermont
Totnes, England

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Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
National Agricultural Library, USDA, ARS
10301 Baltimore Avenue, Room 304
Beltsville, Maryland 20705-2351

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Resources for Producers

Compiled by Mary Gold,
October 1999

Introduction

This publication lists books, magazine and journal articles, periodicals, audiovisual materials, internet sites and organizations that are part of the web resource, "Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)" at the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center's website. The website is a cooperative effort between the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and the National Agricultural Library (NAL) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The specific programs involved are CSREES's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and its Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), and NAL's Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC). The CSA website, **http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/**, also includes a database of CSA farms throughout the U.S., resources related to "Eating Seasonally and Regionally" and links to other sources related to sustainable agriculture.

Much effort has been made to provide accurate information about the resources listed in this publication.. Mention of a particular CSA, publication, website, or organization does not constitute an official endorsement or approval by the United States Department of Agriculture or the Agricultural Research Service of any product or service to the exclusion of others that may be suitable. **Suggestions as to additions and/or corrections to this list of resources are most welcome.**

A Little About CSA

From *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide* by Suzanne DeMuth (AFSIC, 1993):

"Community supported agriculture (CSA) is a new idea in farming, one that has been gaining momentum since its introduction to the United States from Europe in the mid-1980s. The CSA concept originated in the 1960s in Switzerland and Japan, where consumers interested in safe food and farmers seeking stable markets for their crops joined together in economic partnerships. Today, CSA farms in the U.S., known as CSAs, currently number more than 400. Most are located near urban centers in New England, the Mid-Atlantic states, and the Great Lakes region, with growing numbers in other areas, including the West Coast.

"In basic terms, CSA consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. Typically, members or "share-holders" of the farm or garden pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive shares in the farm's bounty throughout the growing season, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land and participating directly in food production. Members also share in the risks of farming, including poor harvests due to unfavorable weather or pests. By direct sales to community members, who have provided the farmer with working capital in advance, growers receive better prices for their crops, gain some financial security, and are relieved of much of the burden of marketing.

"Although CSAs take many forms, all have at their center a shared commitment to building a more local and equitable agricultural system, one that allows growers to focus on land stewardship and still maintain productive and profitable small farms. As stated by Robyn Van En [1948-1997], a leading CSA advocate, "...the main goal...of these community supported projects is to develop participating farms to their highest ecologic potential and to develop a network that will encourage and allow other farms to become involved." CSA farmers typically use organic or biodynamic farming methods, and strive to provide fresh, high-quality foods. More people participate in the farming operation than on conventional farms, and some projects encourage members to work on the farm in exchange for a portion of the membership costs.

"Most CSAs offer a diversity of vegetables, fruits, and herbs in season; some provide a full array of farm produce, including shares in eggs, meat, milk, baked goods, and even firewood. Some farms offer a single commodity, or team up with others so that members receive goods on a more nearly year-round basis. Some are dedicated to serving particular community needs, such as helping to enfranchise homeless persons. Each CSA is structured to meet the needs of the participants, so many variations exist, including the level of financial commitment and active participation by the shareholders; financing, land ownership, and legal form of the farm operation; and details of payment plans and food distribution systems.

"CSA is sometimes known as "subscription farming," and the two terms have been used on occasion to convey the same basic principles. In other cases, however, use of the latter term is intended to convey philosophic and practical differences in a given farm operation. Subscription farming (or marketing) arrangements tend to emphasize the economic benefits, for the farmer as well as consumer, of a guaranteed, direct market for farm products, rather than the concept of community-building that is the basis of a true CSA. Growers typically contract directly with customers, who may be called "members," and who have agreed in advance to buy a minimum amount of produce at a fixed price, but who have little or no investment in the farm itself. An example of one kind of subscription farm, which predates the first CSAs in this country, is the clientele membership club. According to this plan, which was promoted by Booker Wheatley in the early 1980's, a grower could maintain small farm profits by selling low cost memberships to customers who then were allowed to harvest crops at below-market prices."

Books and Articles

1996 CSA Farm Network, by Northeast Organic Farming Association. Still water NY: CSA Farm Network, 1996. 88 pp. [NAL Call #: HD1484 A15 1996]
On-line information/reviews: Sustainable Agriculture Sourcebook:
http://www.sare.org/san/sourcebook/book/NY0412.html
- and -
1997 CSA Farm Network, by S Gilman, editor. Still water NY: CSA Farm Network, 1997. 96 pp.
Availability: Steve Gilman, Coordinator, CSA Farm Network Publications, 130 Ruckytucks Road, Still water NY 12170, phone 518-583-4613; Volume I (1996), $6.00 plus $2.00 mailing; Volume II (1997), $10.00 plus $2.00 mailing; both Volumes I & II, $14.00 plus $2.50 mailing ($16.50)
On-line information/reviews: Permaculture listserv (includes tables of contents for both volumes):
http://metalab.unc.edu/london/permaculture/mailarchives/permaculture-WA/msg00509.html

Basic Formula to Create Community Supported Agriculture, by R Van En. Great Barrington, MA: R Van En, 1992. 80 pp. [HD9225 A2V35 1992]
Availability: Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, P.O. Box 29135, San Francisco CA 94129-0135, phone 888-516-7797, fax 415-561-7796, e-mail biodynaimc@aol.com; $12.95 plus $4.50 shipping & handling (plus $1 for each additional book ordered), checks payable to "Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association"
A limited number of copies are also available from the Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $10.00.
On-line information/reviews: BDA: http://www.biodynamics.com/books.html

"Community Shared Agriculture: Putting the Culture Back Into Agriculture," by R Samson. *Sustainable Farming: The Magazine of Resource Efficient Agriculture Production* (1994) [NAL Call #: HD9225 A2V35 1992]
Availability: Ecological Agriculture Projects
http://www.eap.mcgill.ca/MagRack/SF/Spring%2094%20E.htm

"Community Supported Agriculture," by S Ehrhardt. *Dig Magazine* [1996?].
Availability: http://www.digmagazine.com/96/56-96/sylvia.cfm.

"Community Supported Agriculture," by E Wiggins. *Ag Opportunities (Missouri Alternatives Center)* (Nov./Dec. 1998) 9(1)
Availability: http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/agopp/arc/agopp022.txt

"Community Supported Agriculture," by E Gibson. *Small Farm News* (Nov./Dec. 1993) pp.1, 3-4. [NAL Call #: HD1476 U52C27]

"Community-Supported Agriculture: A Risk-reducing Strategy for Organic Vegetable Farmers," by C Nickerson. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* (1997) 79(5): p. 1729. [NAL Call #: 280.8 J822]

"Community Supported Agriculture: Can it Become the Basis for a New Associative Economy," by G Lamb. *Biodynamics* (Nov./Dec. 1994): p. 8-15.

Community Supported Agriculture Conference (University of California, Davis, Dec. 1993), Davis CA : Small Farm Center, 1994? 37 pp. (Proceedings, edited by G Cohn). [NAL Call #: S494.5 A65C65 1993]
Availability: ANR Communication Services, 6701 San Pablo Ave., Oakland CA 94608-1239, phone 800-994-8849, fax 510-643-5470; Product code SA-002, $8.00.

"Community Supported Agriculture: Connecting Consumers and Farms," by V Grubinger. *The Grower: Vegetable and Small Fruit Newsletter* (1993) 93(11): pp.6-7. [NAL Call #: SB321 G85]

Community Supported Agriculture: Growing Food and Community. Madison WI: Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1998.
Availability: http://www.wisc.edu/cias/pubs/resbrief/021.html

The Community Supported Agriculture Handbook: A Guide to Starting, Operating or Joining a Successful CSA, by Wilson College Center for Sustainable Living. 88 pp. Chambersburg PA: Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1997. [NAL Call #: S494.5 A67C65 1998]
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $10.00.

Community Supported Agriculture: Local Food Systems for Iowa [December 1996]
Availability: PDF file at Iowa State University Extension,
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs/su.htm

Community Supported Agriculture - Making the Connection: A 1995 Handbook for Producers, by University of California, Cooperative Extension, Placer County. Auburn CA; Davis, CA: University of California Cooperative Extension, Placer County; Small Farm Center, University of California, 1995. [NAL Call #: S494.5 A65C66 1995]
Availability: UC Cooperative Extension, Attn: CSA Handbook, 11477 E Avenue, Auburn CA 95603, phone 530-889-7385; $31.81, make check payable to UC Regents.
On-line information/reviews: Press release reference,
http://www.sare.org/san/htdocs/hypermail/html-home/10-html/0264.html

"Community Supported Agriculture: Niche Market or Paradigm Shift," by D Guenthner, pp. 2-5 in *Greenbook*, Saint Paul MN: Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture, Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, 1996. [NAL Call #: S494.5 S86M56]
Availability: Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 90 West Plato Blvd., St. Paul MN 55107, phone 651-296-7673; ask about free copies of this article as well as the *Greenbook* series.

"Community Supported Agriculture - Part II", by J Hoffman. *The Natural Farmer* (special supplement, 1996).

"Community Supported Agriculture: Research and Education for Enhanced Viability and Potential in the Northeast," by DA Lass. *Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Research Projects, Northeast Region* (1996). 31pp. (SARE Project Number: LNE95-63. Record includes computer diskette. Reporting period for this report is September 1995 to December 1996. Report includes publication entitled "1996 CSA Farm Network"). [NAL Call #: S441 S855]

"Creating a Market," by S Milstein. *The Mother Earth News* (1999) 172 pp.40-44. [NAL Call #: AP2 M6]

"CSA - A First Year's Experience," by J Bauermeister. *Washington Tilth* (1997) pp.3, 12-15. [NAL Call #: S605.5 W372]

"Direct Marketing Options: Farmers Markets, Restaurants, Community Supported Agriculture and the Organic Alternative," by S Gilman, pp. 118-121, in *Agricultural Outlook Forum. Proceedings* (Washington DC, 1999). Washington DC: USDA World Agricultural Outlook Board, 1999. [NAL Call #: aHD1755 A376]
Availability: WordPerfect and ASCII versions at
http://www.usda.gov/agency/oce/waob/outlook99/99speeches.htm

"Eight Tips From the Experts to Make Your Community Shared Agriculture Project a Success," by A Salm. *COGNITION: The Voice of Canadian Organic Growers* (1997). [NAL Call #: SB453,5 C6]
Availability: Ecological Agriculture Projects
http://www.eap.mcgill.ca/MagRack/COG/COG_E_97_04.htm

"Factors Influencing the Decision to Join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farm," by JM Kolodinsky and LL Pelch. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture* (1997) 10(2-3): pp.129-141. [NAL Call #: S494.5 S86S8]

"A Farmer's Perspective on the CSA Movement," by J Leap. *The Cultivar* (1996) pp.7-8

Farms of Tomorrow Revisited: Community Supported Farms, Farm Supported Communities, by T Groh and S McFadden. Kimberton PA: Bio-dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, 1997. 294 pp. [NAL Call #: HD1491 U6G76 1997]
Availability: Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, P.O. Box 29135, San Francisco CA 94129-0135, phone 888-516-7797, fax 415-561-7796, e-mail biodynaimc@aol.com; $17.50 plus $4.50 shipping & handling (plus $1 for each additional book ordered), checks payable to "Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association"
On-line information/reviews: BDA: http://www.biodynamics.com/books.html

"Filling the Boxes - Designing a CSA Crop Plan," by J Leap. *The Cultivar* (1997) pp.3-5.

"Growing Food, Growing Community: Community Supported Agriculture in Rural Iowa," by B Wells, S Gradwell, and R Yoder. *Community Development Journal* (1999) 34(1): pp.38-46. [NAL Call #: S521 C65]

Iowa Community Supported Agriculture Resource Guide for Producers and Organizers. Ames IA: Iowa State University Extension, 1999.
Availability: ISU Extension Distribution, 119 Printing and Publications Bldg., Iowa State University, Ames IA 50011-3171, phone 515-294-5247, fax 515-294-2945; Publication # Pm-1694, $5.00, non-Iowa residents add $4.25 shipping and handling.

The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing, by N Hamilton. Des Moines IA: Drake University Agricultural Law Center, 1999 (Prepared under a grant from the US Department of Agriculture, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program)
Availability: Drake University Agricultural Law Center, 2507 University Ave., Des Moines IA 50311, phone 515-271-2065; $20.00.

The Many Faces of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): A Guide to Community Supported Agriculture in Indiana, Michigan, & Ohio, by LB Delind. Hartland MI: Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance, 1999. 107 pp. (Funding provided by the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program through the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture under special project number 06709)
Availability: Michigan Organic Food & Farm Alliance (MOFFA), P.O. Box 530, Hartland MI 48353-0530, phone 810-632-7952, fax 810-632-7620, e-mail hnccinc@ismi.net, web http://www.moffa.org; Item # BK101, $13.50 plus $5.00 shipping and handling ($1.50 each additional item), make checks payable to MOFFA.
On-line information/reviews: MOFFA http://www.moffa.org/pubs.htm

Maximizing Shareholder Retention in Southeastern CSAs: A Step Toward Long Term Stability, by DJ Kane and L Lohr. Portland OR: D. Kane, 1997 ("This study is supported by a grant from the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) in Santa Cruz, CA"). [NAL Call #: HD1484 K36 1997]
Availability: Organic Farming Research Foundation, P.O. Box 440, Santa Cruz CA 95061, phone 831-426-6606, fax 831-426-6670, email research@ofrf.org; $2.00.

Rebirth of the Small Family Farm: A Handbook for Starting a Successful Organic Farm Based on the Community Supported Agriculture Concept, by B Gregson and B Gregson. (1st ed., Vashon Island WA: IMF Associates, 1996. 64 pp. [NAL Call #: HD1476 U62W24 1996]
Availability: IMF Associates, P.O. Box 2542, Vashon Island WA 98070; $9.95, checks payable to IMF.

Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture, by E Henderson and R Van En. White River Junction VT: Chelsea Green, 1999. 254 pp. (In partnership with Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), Northeast Region) [NAL Call #: HD1492 U6 H46 1999]
Availability: Chesea Green Publishing, P.O. Box 428, White River Junction VT 05001, phone 1-800-639-4099; $24.95 plus $6.00 shipping and handling
On-line information/reviews: The Publisher: http://www.chelseagreen.com/Sharing/index.html

Small Farm Resource Guide. Washington DC: Small Farm Program, USDA/CSREES, 1998.
Availability: USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, Plant and Animal Systems, Stop 2220, 1400 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington DC 20250-2220, phone 202-401-4385, fax 202-401-5179, email sfp@reeusda.gov; Free. Also: http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm/guide.htm

"Small-scale Community Supported Agriculture." *Countryside and Small Stock Journal* (Mar. 1999) 83(2): p.78. [NAL Call #: S521 C62]

"Successful Transition to Organic Farming," by D Block. *In Business: The Magazine for Environmental Entrepreneuring* (Nov./Dec. 1998). (Magazine published by J-G Press, Inc., 419 State Ave., Emmaus PA 18049, phone 610-967-4135)

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program, National Database of Projects. Washington DC: Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program, CSREES, USDA, 1999.
Availability: http://www.sare.org/san/projects/

To Till It and Keep It: New Models for Congregational Involvement with the Land, by D Guenther. White Bear MN: Land Stewardship Project, 1995.

"Western Region Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Conference," by J Lawson. Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Research Projects, Western Region (1996) 9 p. (SARE Project Number: SW94-022. Date of report is March 11, 1996. This is a final report.) [NAL Call #: S441 S8554]

"Who Leaves the Farm? An Investigation of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farm Membership," by J Kolodinsky and L Pelch. *Consumer Interests Annual* (1997) 43: p.46.

"Why People Join CSAs." *In Business: The Magazine for Environmental Entrepreneuring* (Nov./Dec.1998). (Magazine published by J-G Press, Inc., 419 State Ave., Emmaus, PA 18049, phone 610-967-4135)

Video and Audio Cassettes

CSA: Be Part of the Solution. Slide show including 22 text slides and 44 photo slides that illustrate text.
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $45.00.

CSA: Making a Difference. 15 minute video
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $10.00.

CSA Clip Art. Over 300 images relevant to small-scale and CSA. Hard copy only.
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $4.00.

CSA: Building a Future for Farming in the Northeast. Northeast CSA Conference Proceeding Audio Cassettes. 38 lectures on audio tape.
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; ask for the list of tapes/order form; tapes are @5.00 plus $1.65 shipping and handling, through Technical Video, Inc., no checks.

Periodicals and Listservs

The Community Farm: A Voice for Community Supported Agriculture. Published quarterly, $20/year.
Availability: Jim Sluyter and Jo Meller, 3480 Potter Rd., Bear Lake MI 49614, phone 616-889-3216, e-mail: fsfarm@mufn.org
web site: http://www.mufn.org/public/tcf

Growing for Market: A Journal of News and Ideas for Market Gardeners. Published monthly, $30.00/year.
Availability: Fairplain Publications, P.O. Box 3747, Lawrence KS 66046, phone 785-748-0605 or 800-307-8949, fax 785-748-0609, e-mail growing4market@earthlink.net

CSA-L Listserv, CSA-L@prairienet.org e-mail list
listowners John Barclay (jbarclay@prairienet.org) of Prairieland CSA in Champaign, Illinois and Sarah Milstein (milstein@pipeline.com) of Roxbury Biodynamic Farm in New York
Availability: subscription information: http://www.prairienet.org/pcsa/CSA-L/

Internet Resources

Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, University of CA, Santa Cruz
"What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)?"
http://zzyx.ucsc.edu/casfs/publicinfo/community.html

Community Supported Agriculture in Maine
http://www.state.me.us./agriculture/marketprod/communityag.htm

Farmer's Market Online
Community Support (Resource Page)
http://www.farmersmarketonline.com/Communit.htm

Missouri Alternatives Center
http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/

The Small Farm Program
USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm

Sustainable Agriculture Network
http://www.sare.org/

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Farmer Direct Marketing, Farm Direct Marketing Bibliography, Part 8
http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/b_8.htm

Urban Agriculture Notes/City Farmer
Canada's Office of Urban Agriculture
http://www.cityfarmer.org/

Homepage for E-Mail List CSA-L@prairienet.org
http://www.prairienet.org/pcsa/CSA-L/
(includes resource and networking organizations, CSAs with Web pages, etc.)

Organizations

National Organizations

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
National Agricultural Library, ARS, USDA
10301 Baltimore Ave., Room 304
Beltsville MD 20705-2351
phone 301-504-6559, fax 301-504-6409
e-mail afsic@nal.usda.gov
http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic

American Farmland Trust
Agricultural Economic Development, Technical Assistance
Herrick Mill, One Short Street
Northampton MA 01060
phone 413-586-4593; fax 413-586-9332
http://www.farmlandinfo.org

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)
P.O. Box 3657
Fayetteville AR 72702
phone 800-346-9140 (M-Th 8:30am-4:30pm CST; F 8:30am-12:30pm CST)
http://www.attra.org/

Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association
P.O. Box 29135
Bldg 1002B, Thoreau Center, The Presidio
San Francisco CA 94129-0135
phone 415-561-7797; fax 415-561-7796
e-mail biodynamic@aol.com
http://www.biodynamics.com

Canadian Organic Growers
P.O. Box 6408
Station J, Ottawa, Ontario, K2A 3Y6 CANADA
phone 613-231-9047, e-mail
COGinfo@gks.com
http://gks.com/cog/

CSA Farm Network Publications
Steve Gilman
130 Ruckytucks Road
Stillwater NY 12170
phone 518-583-4613
e-mail sgilman@netheaven.com

CSA Works
115 Bay Road
Hadley MA 01035
phone 413-586-5133

Ecological Agriculture Projects
McGill University (Macdonald Campus)
Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC, H9X 3V9
CANADA
phone 514-398-7771; fax 514-398-7621
e-mail info@eap.mcgill.ca
http://eap.mcgill.ca/

Robyn Van En Center
Wilson College Center for Sustainable Living
1015 Philadelphia Ave
Chambersburg PA 17201
phone 717-264-4141 x3247; fax 717-264-1578
e-mail jayneshord@usa.net
http://www.umass.edu/umext/csa/

State and Regional Organizations

California Certified Organic Farmers
1115 Mission St.
Santa Cruz CA 95060
phone 831-423-2263
toll free in CA 1-888-423-CCOF
fax 831-423-4528
http://www.ccof.org/index.htm

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
P.O. Box 448
Pittsboro NC 27312
phone 919-542-2402; fax 919-542-7401
e-mail cfsa@carolinafarmstewards.org

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
1450 Linden Dr Rm 146
University of Wisconsin
Madison WI 53706
phone 608-265-3704
e-mail jhendric@macc.wisc.edu

Community Food Security Coalition
P.O. Box 209
Venice CA 90294
phone 310-822-5410; fax 310-822-5410
e-mail asfisher@aol.com
http://www.foodsecurity.org

CSA West
Center for Sustainable Food Systems
Univ. of California
1156 High St.
Santa Cruz CA 95064
phone 408-459-3964, fax 408-459-2799
e-mail farmcsa@aol.com
http://www.caff.org/caff/programs/

The Farm Connection
P.O. Box 477
Dixon NM 87527
phone 505-579-4386

Farming Alternatives Program
216 Warren Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
phone 607-255-9832
http://www.cals.cornell.edu/dept/ruralsoc/fap/fap.html

Future Harvest-Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture
University of Maryland
2101 Ag/Life Sciences Surge Bldg.
College Park MD 20742-3359
phone 301-405-8762; fax 301-405-8763
e-mail fhcasa@umail.umd.edu

Great Lakes Area CSA Coalition (GLACSAC)
C/o Petter Seely
7065 Silver Spring Lane
Plymouth WI 53073
phone 414-8922-4856

Hartford Food System
509 Weathersfield Ave
Hartford CT 06114
phone 860-296-9325, 860-296-8326
e-mail hn2838@handsnet.org

Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA)
1465 120th St.
Kanawha IA 50447
phone 515-495-6367
e-mail libland@kalnet.com

Just Food/NYC Sustainable Food System Alliance
290 Riverside Dr #15D
New York, NY 10025-5287
phone 212-677-1602; fax 212-677-1602, 212-677-1603
e-mail info@justfood.org

Land Stewardship Project
2200 Fourth St
White Bear Lake MN 55110
phone 651-653-0618, fax 651-653-0589
e-mail lspwbl@mtn.org
http://www.landstewardshipproject.org

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
209 Curtiss Hall
Iowa State University
Ames IA 50011-1050
phone 515-294-3711
e-mail leocenter@iastate.edu
http://www.leopold.iastate.edu

Madison Area Community Supported Agricultural Coalition (MACSAC)
4915 Monona Drive, Suite 304
Monona WI 53716
phone 608-226-0300, fax 608-226-0301
e-mail info@wrdc.org
http://www.wisc.edu/cias/macsac

Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association
P.O. Box 2176
Augusta ME 04338-2176
phone 207-622-3118
e-mail mofga@mofga.org
http://www.mofga.org

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
W2493 County Rd ES
East Troy WI 53120
phone 414-642-3303; fax 414-642-4028
e-mail mfai@mfai.org

Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance (MOFFA)
P.O. Box 530
Hartland, MI 48353-0530
phone 810-632-7952, fax 810-632-7620
e-mail hnccinc@ismi.net
http://www.moffa.org

Minnesota Food Association
1916 2nd Ave. South
Minneapolis, MN 55403-3927
phone 612-872-3298
e-mail odonn014@tc.umn.edu

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA)
University of Minnesota
411 Borlaug Hall
St. Paul MN 55108-1013
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toll free 1-800-909-MISA
e-mail: misamail@gold.tc.umn.edu
http://www.misa.umn.edu/csag.html

New England Small Farm Institute
P.O. Box 937
Belchertown MA 01007
phone 413-323-4531

New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association
phone 1-888-983-4400 (toll free)
e-mail marketsnm@nets.com
http://www.farmersmarketsnm.org

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)
411 Sheldon Rd
Barre MA 01005
phone 508-355-2853, fax 978-355-4046
e-mail JACKKITT@aol.com
(also NOFA state chapters involved in CSA, e.g., New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut)

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)
P.O. Box 608
Belchertown MA 01007-0608
phone 413-323-4531; fax 413-323-9595
e-mail nesawg@smallfarm.org

Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society
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phone/fax 701-883-4304
email tpnpsas@drservices.com
http://www.npsas.org

Ohio Ecological Food & Farming Association
P.O. Box 82234
Columbus OH 43202
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e-mail oeffa@iwaynet.net
http://www.greenlink.org/oeffa/

Oregon Tilth
1860 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Suite 200
Salem, OR 97303
phone 503-378-0690; fax 503-378-0809
e-mail organic@tilth.org
http://www.tilth.org/

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)
P.O. Box 419
Millheim PA 16854
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Prairieland CSA
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Champaign IL 61824-1404
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http://www.prairienet.org/pcsa/pcsa.htm

Seattle Tilth Association
4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Room 1
Seattle, Washington 98103
phone 206-633-0451
e-mail tilth@speakeasy.org
http://www.speakeasy.org/~tilth/index.html

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Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group/Community Farm Alliance
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phone 765-463-9366, fax 765-497-0164
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Texas Organic Growers Association (TOGA)
P.O. Box 15211
Austin TX 78761
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http://www.texasorganicgrowers.org/

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e-mail wrdc@execpc.com
(works with Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC))

About AFSIC

The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) is one of several topic-oriented information centers at the National Agricultural Library (NAL). The Library, located in Beltsville, Maryland, is the foremost agricultural library in the world, and is one of four U.S. national libraries along with the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, and the National Library of Education. AFSIC is supported, in part, by USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. AFSIC specializes in locating and accessing information related to alternative cropping systems including sustainable, organic, low-input, biodynamic, and regenerative agriculture. AFSIC also focuses on alternative crops, new uses for traditional crops, and crops grown for industrial production.

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TDD/TTY: 301/504-6856, e-mail afsic@nal.usda.gov
http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic

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Community Supported Agriculture

...*Making the Connection*

A 1995 Handbook for Producers

University of California Cooperative Extension
Placer County

Presented by:

Small Farm Center
University of California, Davis

Community Supported Agriculture ...*Making the Connection*

CSA Handbook

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Community Supported Agriculture ...*Making the Connection*

How to Use this Handbook

This handbook has been designed as a workbook. In addition to the narrative text and examples from CSA farms, there are places that ask you to think about the material, consider how it applies to your situation, and write down your thoughts.

The handbook is divided into chapters, each covering a general subject. The chapters are divided into sections. Several sections end with worksheets that pose questions about you and your farm. The answers will help you develop your CSA. At the end of several chapters are blank charts and forms. Use them for running your CSA or adapt them so they fit your project. Places in the text which refer to one of the worksheets, charts or forms are marked with an icon:

The appendix of this handbook treats a number of subjects in greater detail. Topics in the main text which are further explained in the appendix are also marked with an icon:

Finally, this material has been published in a binder so that you can easily remove and insert items, and so that copying material will be easier.

In using this handbook, if you find something which is wrong, doesn't work for you, or ought to be changed, please contact Placer County Cooperative Extension *(11477 E Avenue, Auburn, CA 95603)* at **(916) 889-7385** or FAX (916) 889-7397, in order that future editions of this publication can be improved.

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Community Supported Agriculture

...Making the Connection

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Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
National Agricultural Library, USDA, ARS
10301 Baltimore Avenue, Room 304
Beltsville, Maryland 20705-2351

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Resources for Producers

Compiled by Mary Gold,
October 1999

Introduction

This publication lists books, magazine and journal articles, periodicals, audiovisual materials, internet sites and organizations that are part of the web resource, "Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)" at the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center's website. The website is a cooperative effort between the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and the National Agricultural Library (NAL) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The specific programs involved are CSREES's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and its Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), and NAL's Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC). The CSA website, **http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/**, also includes a database of CSA farms throughout the U.S., resources related to "Eating Seasonally and Regionally" and links to other sources related to sustainable agriculture.

Much effort has been made to provide accurate information about the resources listed in this publication.. Mention of a particular CSA, publication, website, or organization does not constitute an official endorsement or approval by the United States Department of Agriculture or the Agricultural Research Service of any product or service to the exclusion of others that may be suitable. **Suggestions as to additions and/or corrections to this list of resources are most welcome.**

A Little About CSA

From *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide* by Suzanne DeMuth (AFSIC, 1993):

"Community supported agriculture (CSA) is a new idea in farming, one that has been gaining momentum since its introduction to the United States from Europe in the mid-1980s. The CSA concept originated in the 1960s in Switzerland and Japan, where consumers interested in safe food and farmers seeking stable markets for their crops joined together in economic partnerships. Today, CSA farms in the U.S., known as CSAs, currently number more than 400. Most are located near urban centers in New England, the Mid-Atlantic states, and the Great Lakes region, with growing numbers in other areas, including the West Coast.

"In basic terms, CSA consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. Typically, members or "share-holders" of the farm or garden pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive shares in the farm's bounty throughout the growing season, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land and participating directly in food production. Members also share in the risks of farming, including poor harvests due to unfavorable weather or pests. By direct sales to community members, who have provided the farmer with working capital in advance, growers receive better prices for their crops, gain some financial security, and are relieved of much of the burden of marketing.

"Although CSAs take many forms, all have at their center a shared commitment to building a more local and equitable agricultural system, one that allows growers to focus on land stewardship and still maintain productive and profitable small farms. As stated by Robyn Van En [1948-1997], a leading CSA advocate, "...the main goal...of these community supported projects is to develop participating farms to their highest ecologic potential and to develop a network that will encourage and allow other farms to become involved." CSA farmers typically use organic or biodynamic farming methods, and strive to provide fresh, high-quality foods. More people participate in the farming operation than on conventional farms, and some projects encourage members to work on the farm in exchange for a portion of the membership costs.

"Most CSAs offer a diversity of vegetables, fruits, and herbs in season; some provide a full array of farm produce, including shares in eggs, meat, milk, baked goods, and even firewood. Some farms offer a single commodity, or team up with others so that members receive goods on a more nearly year-round basis. Some are dedicated to serving particular community needs, such as helping to enfranchise homeless persons. Each CSA is structured to meet the needs of the participants, so many variations exist, including the level of financial commitment and active participation by the shareholders; financing, land ownership, and legal form of the farm operation; and details of payment plans and food distribution systems.

"CSA is sometimes known as "subscription farming," and the two terms have been used on occasion to convey the same basic principles. In other cases, however, use of the latter term is intended to convey philosophic and practical differences in a given farm operation. Subscription farming (or marketing) arrangements tend to emphasize the economic benefits, for the farmer as well as consumer, of a guaranteed, direct market for farm products, rather than the concept of community-building that is the basis of a true CSA. Growers typically contract directly with customers, who may be called "members," and who have agreed in advance to buy a minimum amount of produce at a fixed price, but who have little or no investment in the farm itself. An example of one kind of subscription farm, which predates the first CSAs in this country, is the clientele membership club. According to this plan, which was promoted by Booker Wheatley in the early 1980's, a grower could maintain small farm profits by selling low cost memberships to customers who then were allowed to harvest crops at below-market prices."

Books and Articles

1996 CSA Farm Network, by Northeast Organic Farming Association. Still water NY: CSA Farm Network, 1996. 88 pp. [NAL Call #: HD1484 A15 1996]
On-line information/reviews: Sustainable Agriculture Sourcebook:
http://www.sare.org/san/sourcebook/book/NY0412.html
- and -
1997 CSA Farm Network, by S Gilman, editor. Still water NY: CSA Farm Network, 1997. 96 pp.
Availability: Steve Gilman, Coordinator, CSA Farm Network Publications, 130 Ruckytucks Road, Still water NY 12170, phone 518-583-4613; Volume I (1996), $6.00 plus $2.00 mailing; Volume II (1997), $10.00 plus $2.00 mailing; both Volumes I & II, $14.00 plus $2.50 mailing ($16.50)
On-line information/reviews: Permaculture listserv (includes tables of contents for both volumes):
http://metalab.unc.edu/london/permaculture/mailarchives/permaculture-WA/msg00509.html

Basic Formula to Create Community Supported Agriculture, by R Van En. Great Barrington, MA: R Van En, 1992. 80 pp. [HD9225 A2V35 1992]
Availability: Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, P.O. Box 29135, San Francisco CA 94129-0135, phone 888-516-7797, fax 415-561-7796, e-mail biodynaimc@aol.com; $12.95 plus $4.50 shipping & handling (plus $1 for each additional book ordered), checks payable to "Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association"
A limited number of copies are also available from the Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $10.00.
On-line information/reviews: BDA: http://www.biodynamics.com/books.html

"Community Shared Agriculture: Putting the Culture Back Into Agriculture," by R Samson. *Sustainable Farming: The Magazine of Resource Efficient Agriculture Production* (1994) [NAL Call #: HD9225 A2V35 1992]
Availability: Ecological Agriculture Projects
http://www.eap.mcgill.ca/MagRack/SF/Spring%2094%20E.htm

"Community Supported Agriculture," by S Ehrhardt. *Dig Magazine* [1996?].
Availability: http://www.digmagazine.com/96/56-96/sylvia.cfm.

"Community Supported Agriculture," by E Wiggins. *Ag Opportunities (Missouri Alternatives Center)* (Nov./Dec. 1998) 9(1)
Availability: http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/agopp/arc/agopp022.txt

"Community Supported Agriculture," by E Gibson. *Small Farm News* (Nov./Dec. 1993) pp.1, 3-4. [NAL Call #: HD1476 U52C27]

"Community-Supported Agriculture: A Risk-reducing Strategy for Organic Vegetable Farmers," by C Nickerson. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* (1997) 79(5): p. 1729. [NAL Call #: 280.8 J822]

"Community Supported Agriculture: Can it Become the Basis for a New Associative Economy," by G Lamb. *Biodynamics* (Nov./Dec. 1994): p. 8-15.

Community Supported Agriculture Conference (University of California, Davis, Dec. 1993), Davis CA : Small Farm Center, 1994? 37 pp. (Proceedings, edited by G Cohn). [NAL Call #: S494.5 A65C65 1993]
Availability: ANR Communication Services, 6701 San Pablo Ave., Oakland CA 94608-1239, phone 800-994-8849, fax 510-643-5470; Product code SA-002, $8.00.

"Community Supported Agriculture: Connecting Consumers and Farms," by V Grubinger. *The Grower: Vegetable and Small Fruit Newsletter* (1993) 93(11): pp.6-7. [NAL Call #: SB321 G85]

Community Supported Agriculture: Growing Food and Community. Madison WI: Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1998.
Availability: http://www.wisc.edu/cias/pubs/resbrief/021.html

The Community Supported Agriculture Handbook: A Guide to Starting, Operating or Joining a Successful CSA, by Wilson College Center for Sustainable Living. 88 pp. Chambersburg PA: Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1997. [NAL Call #: S494.5 A67C65 1998]
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $10.00.

Community Supported Agriculture: Local Food Systems for Iowa [December 1996]
Availability: PDF file at Iowa State University Extension, http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs/su.htm

Community Supported Agriculture - Making the Connection: A 1995 Handbook for Producers, by University of California, Cooperative Extension, Placer County. Auburn CA; Davis, CA: University of California Cooperative Extension, Placer County; Small Farm Center, University of California, 1995. [NAL Call #: S494.5 A65C66 1995]
Availability: UC Cooperative Extension, Attn: CSA Handbook, 11477 E Avenue, Auburn CA 95603, phone 530-889-7385; $31.81, make check payable to UC Regents.
On-line information/reviews: Press release reference, http://www.sare.org/san/htdocs/hypermail/html-home/10-html/0264.html

"Community Supported Agriculture: Niche Market or Paradigm Shift," by D Guenthner, pp. 2-5 in *Greenbook*, Saint Paul MN: Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture, Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, 1996. [NAL Call #: S494.5 S86M56]
Availability: Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 90 West Plato Blvd., St. Paul MN 55107, phone 651-296-7673; ask about free copies of this article as well as the *Greenbook* series.

"Community Supported Agriculture - Part II", by J Hoffman. *The Natural Farmer* (special supplement, 1996).

"Community Supported Agriculture: Research and Education for Enhanced Viability and Potential in the Northeast," by DA Lass. *Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Research Projects, Northeast Region* (1996). 31pp. (SARE Project Number: LNE95-63. Record includes computer diskette. Reporting period for this report is September 1995 to December 1996. Report includes publication entitled "1996 CSA Farm Network"). [NAL Call #: S441 S855]

"Creating a Market," by S Milstein. *The Mother Earth News* (1999) 172 pp.40-44. [NAL Call #: AP2 M6]

"CSA - A First Year's Experience," by J Bauermeister. *Washington Tilth* (1997) pp.3, 12-15. [NAL Call #: S605.5 W372]

"Direct Marketing Options: Farmers Markets, Restaurants, Community Supported Agriculture and the Organic Alternative," by S Gilman, pp. 118-121, in *Agricultural Outlook Forum. Proceedings* (Washington DC, 1999). Washington DC: USDA World Agricultural Outlook Board, 1999. [NAL Call #: aHD1755 A376]
Availability: WordPerfect and ASCII versions at
http://www.usda.gov/agency/oce/waob/outlook99/99speeches.htm

"Eight Tips From the Experts to Make Your Community Shared Agriculture Project a Success," by A Salm. *COGNITION: The Voice of Canadian Organic Growers* (1997). [NAL Call #: SB453,5 C6]
Availability: Ecological Agriculture Projects
http://www.eap.mcgill.ca/MagRack/COG/COG_E_97_04.htm

"Factors Influencing the Decision to Join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farm," by JM Kolodinsky and LL Pelch. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture* (1997) 10(2-3): pp.129-141. [NAL Call #: S494.5 S86S8]

"A Farmer's Perspective on the CSA Movement," by J Leap. *The Cultivar* (1996) pp.7-8

Farms of Tomorrow Revisited: Community Supported Farms, Farm Supported Communities, by T Groh and S McFadden. Kimberton PA: Bio-dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, 1997. 294 pp. [NAL Call #: HD1491 U6G76 1997]
Availability: Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, P.O. Box 29135, San Francisco CA 94129-0135, phone 888-516-7797, fax 415-561-7796, e-mail biodynaimc@aol.com; $17.50 plus $4.50 shipping & handling (plus $1 for each additional book ordered), checks payable to "Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association"
On-line information/reviews: BDA: http://www.biodynamics.com/books.html

"Filling the Boxes - Designing a CSA Crop Plan," by J Leap. *The Cultivar* (1997) pp.3-5.

"Growing Food, Growing Community: Community Supported Agriculture in Rural Iowa," by B Wells, S Gradwell, and R Yoder. *Community Development Journal* (1999) 34(1): pp.38-46. [NAL Call #: S521 C65]

Iowa Community Supported Agriculture Resource Guide for Producers and Organizers. Ames IA: Iowa State University Extension, 1999.
Availability: ISU Extension Distribution, 119 Printing and Publications Bldg., Iowa State University, Ames IA 50011-3171, phone 515-294-5247, fax 515-294-2945; Publication # Pm-1694, $5.00, non-Iowa residents add $4.25 shipping and handling.

The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing, by N Hamilton. Des Moines IA: Drake University Agricultural Law Center, 1999 (Prepared under a grant from the US Department of Agriculture, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program)
Availability: Drake University Agricultural Law Center, 2507 University Ave., Des Moines IA 50311, phone 515-271-2065; $20.00.

The Many Faces of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): A Guide to Community Supported Agriculture in Indiana, Michigan, & Ohio, by LB Delind. Hartland MI: Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance, 1999. 107 pp. (Funding provided by the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program through the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture under special project number 06709)
Availability: Michigan Organic Food & Farm Alliance (MOFFA), P.O. Box 530, Hartland MI 48353-0530, phone 810-632-7952, fax 810-632-7620, e-mail hnccinc@ismi.net, web http://www.moffa.org; Item # BK101, $13.50 plus $5.00 shipping and handling ($1.50 each additional item), make checks payable to MOFFA.
On-line information/reviews: MOFFA http://www.moffa.org/pubs.htm

Maximizing Shareholder Retention in Southeastern CSAs: A Step Toward Long Term Stability, by DJ Kane and L Lohr. Portland OR: D. Kane, 1997 ("This study is supported by a grant from the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) in Santa Cruz, CA"). [NAL Call #: HD1484 K36 1997]
Availability: Organic Farming Research Foundation, P.O. Box 440, Santa Cruz CA 95061, phone 831-426-6606, fax 831-426-6670, email research@ofrf.org; $2.00.

Rebirth of the Small Family Farm: A Handbook for Starting a Successful Organic Farm Based on the Community Supported Agriculture Concept, by B Gregson and B Gregson. (1st ed., Vashon Island WA: IMF Associates, 1996. 64 pp. [NAL Call #: HD1476 U62W24 1996]
Availability: IMF Associates, P.O. Box 2542, Vashon Island WA 98070; $9.95, checks payable to IMF.

Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture, by E Henderson and R Van En. White River Junction VT: Chelsea Green, 1999. 254 pp. (In partnership with Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), Northeast Region) [NAL Call #: HD1492 U6 H46 1999]
Availability: Chesea Green Publishing, P.O. Box 428, White River Junction VT 05001, phone 1-800-639-4099; $24.95 plus $6.00 shipping and handling
On-line information/reviews: The Publisher: http://www.chelseagreen.com/Sharing/index.html

Small Farm Resource Guide. Washington DC: Small Farm Program, USDA/CSREES, 1998.
Availability: USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, Plant and Animal Systems, Stop 2220, 1400 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington DC 20250-2220, phone 202-401-4385, fax 202-401-5179, email sfp@reeusda.gov; Free. Also: http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm/guide.htm

"Small-scale Community Supported Agriculture." *Countryside and Small Stock Journal* (Mar. 1999) 83(2): p.78. [NAL Call #: S521 C62]

"Successful Transition to Organic Farming," by D Block. *In Business: The Magazine for Environmental Entrepreneuring* (Nov./Dec. 1998). (Magazine published by J-G Press, Inc., 419 State Ave., Emmaus PA 18049, phone 610-967-4135)

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program, National Database of Projects. Washington DC: Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program, CSREES, USDA, 1999.
Availability: http://www.sare.org/san/projects/

To Till It and Keep It: New Models for Congregational Involvement with the Land, by D Guenther. White Bear MN: Land Stewardship Project, 1995.

"Western Region Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Conference," by J Lawson. Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Research Projects, Western Region (1996) 9 p. (SARE Project Number: SW94-022. Date of report is March 11, 1996. This is a final report.) [NAL Call #: S441 S8554]

"Who Leaves the Farm? An Investigation of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farm Membership," by J Kolodinsky and L Pelch. *Consumer Interests Annual* (1997) 43: p.46.

"Why People Join CSAs." *In Business: The Magazine for Environmental Entrepreneuring* (Nov./Dec.1998). (Magazine published by J-G Press, Inc., 419 State Ave., Emmaus, PA 18049, phone 610-967-4135)

Video and Audio Cassettes

CSA: Be Part of the Solution. Slide show including 22 text slides and 44 photo slides that illustrate text.
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $45.00.

CSA: Making a Difference. 15 minute video
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $10.00.

CSA Clip Art. Over 300 images relevant to small-scale and CSA. Hard copy only.
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; $4.00.

CSA: Building a Future for Farming in the Northeast. Northeast CSA Conference Proceeding Audio Cassettes. 38 lectures on audio tape.
Availability: The Robyn Van En Center, c/o Center for Sustainable Living, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201, phone 717-264-4141 ext. 3247, fax 717-264-1578; ask for the list of tapes/order form; tapes are @5.00 plus $1.65 shipping and handling, through Technical Video, Inc., no checks.

Periodicals and Listservs

The Community Farm: A Voice for Community Supported Agriculture. Published quarterly, $20/year.
Availability: Jim Sluyter and Jo Meller, 3480 Potter Rd., Bear Lake MI 49614, phone 616-889-3216, e-mail: fsfarm@mufn.org
web site: http://www.mufn.org/public/tcf

Growing for Market: A Journal of News and Ideas for Market Gardeners. Published monthly, $30.00/year.
Availability: Fairplain Publications, P.O. Box 3747, Lawrence KS 66046, phone 785-748-0605 or 800-307-8949, fax 785-748-0609, e-mail growing4market@earthlink.net

CSA-L Listserv, CSA-L@prairienet.org e-mail list
listowners John Barclay (jbarclay@prairienet.org) of Prairieland CSA in Champaign, Illinois and Sarah Milstein (milstein@pipeline.com) of Roxbury Biodynamic Farm in New York
Availability: subscription information: http://www.prairienet.org/pcsa/CSA-L/

Internet Resources

Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, University of CA, Santa Cruz
"What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)?"
http://zzyx.ucsc.edu/casfs/publicinfo/community.html

Community Supported Agriculture in Maine
http://www.state.me.us./agriculture/marketprod/communityag.htm

Farmer's Market Online
Community Support (Resource Page)
http://www.farmersmarketonline.com/Communit.htm

Missouri Alternatives Center
http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/

The Small Farm Program
USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm

Sustainable Agriculture Network
http://www.sare.org/

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Farmer Direct Marketing, Farm Direct Marketing Bibliography, Part 8
http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/b_8.htm

Urban Agriculture Notes/City Farmer
Canada's Office of Urban Agriculture
http://www.cityfarmer.org/

Homepage for E-Mail List CSA-L@prairienet.org
http://www.prairienet.org/pcsa/CSA-L/
(includes resource and networking organizations, CSAs with Web pages, etc.)

Organizations

National Organizations

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
National Agricultural Library, ARS, USDA
10301 Baltimore Ave., Room 304
Beltsville MD 20705-2351
phone 301-504-6559, fax 301-504-6409
e-mail afsic@nal.usda.gov
http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic

American Farmland Trust
Agricultural Economic Development, Technical Assistance
Herrick Mill, One Short Street
Northampton MA 01060
phone 413-586-4593; fax 413-586-9332
http://www.farmlandinfo.org

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)
P.O. Box 3657
Fayetteville AR 72702
phone 800-346-9140 (M-Th 8:30am-4:30pm CST; F 8:30am-12:30pm CST)
http://www.attra.org/

Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association
P.O. Box 29135
Bldg 1002B, Thoreau Center, The Presidio
San Francisco CA 94129-0135
phone 415-561-7797; fax 415-561-7796
e-mail biodynamic@aol.com
http://www.biodynamics.com

Canadian Organic Growers
P.O. Box 6408
Station J, Ottawa, Ontario, K2A 3Y6 CANADA
phone 613-231-9047, e-mail
COGinfo@gks.com
http://gks.com/cog/

CSA Farm Network Publications
Steve Gilman
130 Ruckytucks Road
Stillwater NY 12170
phone 518-583-4613
e-mail sgilman@netheaven.com

CSA Works
115 Bay Road
Hadley MA 01035
phone 413-586-5133

Ecological Agriculture Projects
McGill University (Macdonald Campus)
Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC, H9X 3V9
CANADA
phone 514-398-7771; fax 514-398-7621
e-mail info@eap.mcgill.ca
http://eap.mcgill.ca/

Robyn Van En Center
Wilson College Center for Sustainable Living
1015 Philadelphia Ave
Chambersburg PA 17201
phone 717-264-4141 x3247; fax 717-264-1578
e-mail jayneshord@usa.net
http://www.umass.edu/umext/csa/

State and Regional Organizations

California Certified Organic Farmers
1115 Mission St.
Santa Cruz CA 95060
phone 831-423-2263
toll free in CA 1-888-423-CCOF
fax 831-423-4528
http://www.ccof.org/index.htm

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
P.O. Box 448
Pittsboro NC 27312
phone 919-542-2402; fax 919-542-7401
e-mail cfsa@carolinafarmstewards.org

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
1450 Linden Dr Rm 146
University of Wisconsin
Madison WI 53706
phone 608-265-3704
e-mail jhendric@macc.wisc.edu

Community Food Security Coalition
P.O. Box 209
Venice CA 90294
phone 310-822-5410; fax 310-822-5410
e-mail asfisher@aol.com
http://www.foodsecurity.org

CSA West
Center for Sustainable Food Systems
Univ. of California
1156 High St.
Santa Cruz CA 95064
phone 408-459-3964, fax 408-459-2799
e-mail farmcsa@aol.com
http://www.caff.org/caff/programs/

The Farm Connection
P.O. Box 477
Dixon NM 87527
phone 505-579-4386

Farming Alternatives Program
216 Warren Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
phone 607-255-9832
http://www.cals.cornell.edu/dept/ruralsoc/fap/fap.html

Future Harvest-Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture
University of Maryland
2101 Ag/Life Sciences Surge Bldg.
College Park MD 20742-3359
phone 301-405-8762; fax 301-405-8763
e-mail fhcasa@umail.umd.edu

Great Lakes Area CSA Coalition (GLACSAC)
C/o Petter Seely
7065 Silver Spring Lane
Plymouth WI 53073
phone 414-8922-4856

Hartford Food System
509 Weathersfield Ave
Hartford CT 06114
phone 860-296-9325, 860-296-8326
e-mail hn2838@handsnet.org

Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA)
1465 120th St.
Kanawha IA 50447
phone 515-495-6367
e-mail libland@kalnet.com

Just Food/NYC Sustainable Food System Alliance
290 Riverside Dr #15D
New York, NY 10025-5287
phone 212-677-1602; fax 212-677-1602, 212-677-1603
e-mail info@justfood.org

Land Stewardship Project
2200 Fourth St
White Bear Lake MN 55110
phone 651-653-0618, fax 651-653-0589
e-mail lspwbl@mtn.org
http://www.landstewardshipproject.org

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
209 Curtiss Hall
Iowa State University
Ames IA 50011-1050
phone 515-294-3711
e-mail leocenter@iastate.edu
http://www.leopold.iastate.edu

Madison Area Community Supported Agricultural Coalition (MACSAC)
4915 Monona Drive, Suite 304
Monona WI 53716
phone 608-226-0300, fax 608-226-0301
e-mail info@wrdc.org
http://www.wisc.edu/cias/macsac

Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association
P.O. Box 2176
Augusta ME 04338-2176
phone 207-622-3118
e-mail mofga@mofga.org
http://www.mofga.org

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
W2493 County Rd ES
East Troy WI 53120
phone 414-642-3303; fax 414-642-4028
e-mail mfai@mfai.org

Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance (MOFFA)
P.O. Box 530
Hartland, MI 48353-0530
phone 810-632-7952, fax 810-632-7620
e-mail hnccinc@ismi.net
http://www.moffa.org

Minnesota Food Association
1916 2nd Ave. South
Minneapolis, MN 55403-3927
phone 612-872-3298
e-mail odonn014@tc.umn.edu

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA)
University of Minnesota
411 Borlaug Hall
St. Paul MN 55108-1013
phone 612- 625-8235; fax 612-625-1268
toll free 1-800-909-MISA
e-mail: misamail@gold.tc.umn.edu
http://www.misa.umn.edu/csag.html

New England Small Farm Institute
P.O. Box 937
Belchertown MA 01007
phone 413-323-4531

New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association
phone 1-888-983-4400 (toll free)
e-mail marketsnm@nets.com
http://www.farmersmarketsnm.org

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)
411 Sheldon Rd
Barre MA 01005
phone 508-355-2853, fax 978-355-4046
e-mail JACKKITT@aol.com
(also NOFA state chapters involved in CSA, e.g., New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut)

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)
P.O. Box 608
Belchertown MA 01007-0608
phone 413-323-4531; fax 413-323-9595
e-mail nesawg@smallfarm.org

Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society
9824 79th St SE
Fullerton, ND 58441-9725
phone/fax 701-883-4304
email tpnpsas@drservices.com
http://www.npsas.org

Ohio Ecological Food & Farming Association
P.O. Box 82234
Columbus OH 43202
phone 614-267-FOOD; fax 614-267-4763
e-mail oeffa@iwaynet.net
http://www.greenlink.org/oeffa/

Oregon Tilth
1860 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Suite 200
Salem, OR 97303
phone 503-378-0690; fax 503-378-0809
e-mail organic@tilth.org
http://www.tilth.org/

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)
P.O. Box 419
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Growing for Market is published monthly by Fairplain Publications, P.O. Box 3747, Lawrence, Kansas 66046; phone: 785-748-0605; fax: 785-748-0609; Reader service: 1-800-307-8949.

ISSN 1060-9296

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Subscription rates: $27 per year in the U.S.; $30 to Canada; $36 overseas. Single copies: $3. All subscriptions must be paid in U.S. funds.
Volume 7, Number 4, April 1998
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Letter from Wild Onion Farm

This month, we're paying special attention to Community Supported Agriculture, with articles from CSA farmers on the East Coast, West Coast and Midwest. For those unfamiliar with it, CSA is a system in which farmers sell "shares" of their harvest to members for a set price, which is usually paid at the start of the season, thus capitalizing the farm. A similar strategy is the subscription program, in which consumers agree to buy a certain amount of produce - usually a bag a week - throughout the season.

The late Robyn Van En used to say that CSA was the most hopeful thing happening in agriculture today. I absolutely agree with her. CSA runs counter to all the negative forces working against the small farm.

CSAs are not forced to take an ever-diminishing share of the food dollar, as farmers at large must. According to USDA statistics, the farmer's share of the food dollar is now about 21 cents, down from 37 cents in 1980. The other 79 cents goes to transportation, processing, packaging and marketing. (As a relevant aside, an easy way to save yourself some of those non-food costs in your own food budget is to buy store brands. The fifth graders at my son's school did blind taste tests for a science fair project, and they found that an overwhelming majority of kids *prefer* store brands of cereals and cookies, but not crackers!)

There's no official breakdown of what percent of fresh produce dollars goes to the farmer, but anyone who has sold wholesale knows that you're lucky to get 50 percent of the retail price. CSA farmers, though, are able to capture nearly all of the food dollar for their products. Those whose members pick up at the farm and bag their own don't even have to pay for delivery and packaging.

CSA farms, unlike other small farms, are also increasing in number. In 1995, there were three CSAs in Iowa; this year, there are 35. Nationwide, the number is estimated to be 1,000, but that is a moving target and could be much higher when all the farms with some kind of a CSA component are included in the total. It's also not known whether CSA membership is growing, but the reports I hear from farmers is that they are increasing their production each year for CSA. The 400-member CSA is no longer extraordinary, and some farms are aiming for 800 to 1,000 shares.

CSAs also don't have to deal with uncertain markets, as most farmers do. A shipload of Chinese garlic isn't going to affect the garlic harvest for the CSA farmer, as it could for other garlic farmers. At our own farm in Lawrence, Kansas, we are starting the fifth year of our involvement in a cooperative CSA with eight farmers and 350 shareholders. We know that, if we can grow it, we can sell it. So that eliminates half of our anxiety.

Most important, as farmers in our society become a smaller and smaller minority, with increasingly fewer interactions with the people who eat their food, CSAs connect farmers and consumers in powerful ways. In the articles in this issue, you will read about the wonderful, mutually admiring interactions between farmers and their shareholders.

Unfortunately, anything successful eventually attracts the attention of regulators who want to anticipate problems that could possibly occur. Community Alliance with Family Farmers in California reports on three incidents in which government officials caused problems for CSAs because their drop-off sites are not recognized as legitimate places of food distribution. One CSA was ordered to move its drop site out of town by a conservative city council ostensibly worried about food contamination.

To all of you who are doing a CSA, good luck as you paddle upstream.

Lynn Byczynski
Editor and Publisher

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE REPORT

CSAs that Quit

Elizabeth Henderson

We don't have the statistics on the percentage of CSAs that don't last. Nor have we been able to track down all the CSAs that started and then quit within five years. This report is based on interviews with farmers and sharers from a dozen short-lived CSAs.

One common thread uniting most of these CSAs is the failure to develop a strong core group. Several of the farmers who initiated these CSAs never tried to form a Core. Others did make an effort, but either were not able to find sharers who would take responsibility or failed to recruit replacements when their initial supporters moved on. Finding themselves doing all of the growing, distribution and organizing, they became discouraged.

Former sharers in two of these CSAs told me they were overwhelmed by the quantity of food and felt no control over the selection. More member involvement and better communications could have solved these problems. Robert Perry in Homer, NY, blamed himself for failing to "aggressively recruit" new core people after 3 key members moved away. He said it was a problem "being dependent on labor for weeding till it was overwhelming." Members assumed the CSA would function whether they showed up for their work shifts or not. Robert still found that the 5 years of the CSA was the most successful and satisfying marketing he has done.

The most frequent reason given for the dissolution of CSAs is not particular to the CSA structure, but rather to the scale of the farm enterprise: the farmer finds a better paying job. With only 15 or 20 or even 40 shares absorbing the farmer's full time, there is not enough money to compete with the benefits of a full time job off the farm. One farmer decided to concentrate on another way of marketing that proved more promising.

A few of these CSAs fell apart for the kind of reason that destroys farms large or small—divorce or other emotional upheaval in the farm family. One of these CSAs offered the sharers the possibility of using the farm's land to grow food for themselves. They were unable or unwilling to take on that much responsibility.

Farms in remote rural areas found they were unable to recruit local sharers. Jim Gerritsen of Wood Prairie Farm in Maine was able to attract newcomers to the county as sharers, but long time residents were not interested. A few years back in New Mexico, Valerie Kaeppler had a hard time selling the concept of CSA to her rural neighbors. Farmers in other parts of the country similarly report that few of their rural neighbors care to purchase organically grown foods. The chemically sensitive or hard-core organic advocates who lack the time to garden are the most likely candidates. Overall, it does seem easier to find potential CSA members in cities or suburbs.

The most frequent reason given for the dissolution of CSAs is not particular to the CSA structure, but rather to the scale of the farm enterprise...

Finally, we contacted members of two CSAs which fell apart because of the lack of farming experience on the part of the farmer. Production was not adequate to make up decent shares, things were disorganized and quality was poor. One grower tried to get started in a year of a serious drought. He undercharged for his shares and then could not produce even enough food for that limited payment. He gave up in August. Neither he nor the two growers for the other CSA had any previous experience in growing for market.

Jim Volkhausen of Buttermilk Farm near Ithaca, NY, was one of the farmers who stopped doing a CSA to take another job. He had other interests in life and with only 40 shares could never have lived on just the farm income. Other CSAs in the area picked up former members. Despite its failure to produce enough money, Jim considered the CSA successful: "The concept of member involvement was very important and I would encourage others to do it that way for the sense of community."

After six years of successful operation, Pat and Mike Kane of Shamrock Hill Farm in Port Crane, NY, have decided to take a year's sabbatical from the CSA. Pat's non-farm job has grown to be too consuming to allow her much time to help Mike on the farm, and Mike can't do the high quality job he likes all by himself. Their sharers have been very supportive and agree to keep the core together through the year off by focusing on bulk buying. Farmers and sharers hope to redesign the project for the future to make it easier for the farm. The Shamrock Hill CSA has attracted a high level of member participation, so it will be interesting to see what changes they make for next year.

The failure to create a real sense of community participation led Harvey Harman at Sustenance Farm near Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, to disband his CSA. For five years the project worked well enough; members were happy to get the vegetables and to support the farm financially, though with 40 shares, there was not enough income to provide a living for the farmer. With 30 to 40 miles between their homes and the farm, the members never became active. Turnover from year to year was high. The core group that did form was forced to spend too much of its energy recruiting new members. Even social events, such as pot lucks, which the farm sponsored in town, were not well attended. As Harvey put it, the CSA was a good thing, but "the community aspect never happened."

Elizabeth Henderson and David Stern farm at Rose Valley Farm in Rose, NY. This article will appear in the *1997 CSA Farm Network.*, to be published this spring. Copies of the 1996 edition are still available from NOFA-NY, $6 plus postage. Use the order form on page 23.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE WITH FAMILY FARMERS

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FARMING WELL AT EATWELL FARM

Start-Up CSA Brings Stability to Truck Farm

BY PAM KASEY

The phone rings: yet another customer hoping to buy your produce. What could be more gratifying for a farmer? For the past year, ever since they converted part of their farm to a subscription marketing system called community supported agriculture (CSA), Frances Andrews and Nigel Walker of Eatwell Farm in Winters have had this experience several times a week. They planned for 48 subscribers in the first year. "But people just kept calling," Frances says with a smile. "It was flattering! We finally had to cut it off at 125."

Eatwell Farm offers a weekly basket of fresh fruits and vegetables delivered to drop-off points in San Francisco and Davis each Tuesday. New subscribers pay $17/week for a trial month. Those who continue pay $204 for three months. That's twelve weeks at $17 each and a thirteenth week for free, from the members' point of view, or $15.69 per week to the farm.

The baskets are as varied as any marketgoer's would be. A typical winter basket contains carrots and potatoes; Italian parsley, red Russian kale and salad mix; navel oranges, blood oranges and a lemon; onions, garlic, leeks, and sun-dried tomatoes. Summer baskets include all of the hot season's succulent best. Eatwell's specialty is heirloom tomatoes.

Walking the symmetrical layout of their farm as a cool afternoon becomes dusk, Frances and Nigel seem a little surprised and clearly pleased at the interest in their produce. They're consumed with this still-new project and eager to share their experience. Frances, pregnant with their first child, explains the business end of the enterprise, while English-born Nigel patiently describes details of the farming operation. "You can see we live, eat and breathe the CSA," he confides.

A Balance that Works

Before starting the CSA in April, 1996, Frances and Nigel sold their produce at the San Francisco Ferry Plaza farmers' market twice a week. They enjoyed the customer contact of the market, but found the sales uneven: heavy in summer, light in winter.

Community supported agriculture has evened out their cash flow, according to Frances. "The CSA shows its true colors in the winter. The market is way down, but the CSA is up. It's very steady income." Now, after their first year, they're selling about 35% of their produce through the CSA and 65% at market; they plan to expand the CSA in the coming season, shifting that ratio to about 50-50.

The CSA and market are perfect complements for Eatwell. "We can plan for the CSA much more carefully than for the market," Nigel explains. "We aim for the baskets to have everyday vegetables, with the occasional funny thing thrown in." At the same time, the market provides a cushion of flexibility. "We sell things at the farmers' market that aren't necessarily appropriate to put in baskets: a cardoon, a head of radicchio, a head of escarole. And it doesn't matter if I haven't got lettuce this week at the market. People there can buy it from somebody else."

The mix of CSA and market work helps to vary farm tasks through the week, too. Frances and Nigel and their employees—four in summer, one in winter—spend Mondays picking and preparing baskets for the CSA. Tuesdays are CSA delivery days. On Thursdays and Fridays, they pick for market, and on Saturdays they sell at Ferry

Continued on next page.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED G COMES IN TWO FLAVORS

CSAs bring stability to farms by shifting some or all of the financial burden to the consumers fed by the farm. While the simplicity and flexibility of CSAs allows for much variation, most fall into two broad categories.

Shareholder Farms

Where farmers and their communities want a lot of mutual involvement, CSA members may be shareholders. They pay a lump sum in advance and receive their proportionate share of the season's bounty each week: plenty in a good harvest and less when the harvest is lean. Members of this type of CSA often take an active interest in the farm, and those who are most involved may form a "core group" to participate in CSA administration.

At the far end of the spectrum, farm ets may belong to a shareholder corpo- ation, of which the farmers are employees. There are benefits all around. CSA shareholders get the freshest possible produce and participate intensively in their local agriculture, while farmers are relieved of financial risks, receiving a steady and predictable cash flow for the farm and for their salaries. This type of CSA works especially well when members are local.

Subscription Farming

Many CSAs with a more distant membership practice subscription farming. Like shareholders, CSA subscribers pay up front, but receive the farmers' guarantee of a certain value in produce each week. Subscription farmers are at risk for poor harvest, but still secure their markets and incomes for the season.

Regardless of the contractual specifics, all CSAs provide a direct and important link between the consumer and the farm.

—Pam Kasey

Continued from first page.

Plaza. Ongoing farm management and CSA administration fit around this schedule as time permits.

All of this requires careful organization and record-keeping. Before beginning to farm 6 years ago, Frances gained valuable computer and office experience in investment banking; she does the accounting for the CSA. Nigel, who has been farming for fifteen years, manages the planting and harvesting schedules and oversees the field crew. Their skills, like their blend of CSA and market, come together in a balance that works.

JACOB KATZ

"I wouldn't give up the farmers' market," says Frances, shown here making herb bunches. "That's where we keep in touch with what people are looking for. But we try to avoid wholesaling. It takes a lot of time to build a relationship with the buyers and chefs, and then they leave and you have to start all over again."

Word of Mouth is Still the Best

Eatwell has no trouble attracting and keeping members. To start the CSA, Frances and Nigel gave away sample baskets at the market to potential subscribers who showed energy for recruiting in their communities. This well-targeted generosity brought them their goal of forty-eight subscribers for their first delivery, in early April, 1996.

Variety can make or break a CSA. Frances and Nigel vary the baskets as if they were shopping for themselves, trading with local farms to include items like nuts and fruits that they don't produce on the farm. Each week they take home a basket randomly chosen from the lot, to be sure they know what subscribers experience.

finally, Nigel and Frances actively seek feedback, dealing with problems as they come up. This approach has given them a solid reputation and a loyal following. Most members, they say, renew when their subscriptions are up. Eatwell has never had to advertise, although they do have a site on the Worldwide Web: www.eatwell.com. Despite this modern cyber-marketing, they feel sure that most new members come to them by word of mouth.

Community Support Comes in Many Forms

Nigel and Frances are quick to acknowledge the importance of having help when establishing and maintaining a subscriber population located more than an hour from the farm.

"We have several people who are doing things for us in exchange for baskets, or mainly out of the goodness of their hearts," says Nigel. A friend in San Francisco did much of the initial legwork there, researching drop-off points and writing a brochure. "He was the guy who kicked us into action," they admit. Another friend wrote customized database software: "That, more than anything, is going to streamline the CSA administration," says Frances. Aimee Giles has recently taken on administration of the CSA from her San Francisco home, providing Eatwell with a "city office."

These helpers, together with the farm's subscribers, create a community that truly supports agriculture at Eatwell Farm. ■

COMMUNICATING WITH CSA SUBSCRIBERS

Eatwell Farm's weekly one-page newsletter combines news of the farm with storage tips and recipes, especially for unusual vegetables. Subscribers say they appreciate the personalized newsletter which, through the miracle of computers, contains current information about the status of their account.

"And about half our members have e-mail," estimates Nigel. "It's an easy way to tell them what will be in next week's basket, or what they owe, without playing phone tag."

EATWELL FARM

The Stats: 17 acres of Yolo loam. 5 acres planted to fruit trees in 1993. 12 acres of vegetables in permanent beds 225′ long and 40″ wide, set with buried drip irrigation, worked with a Sundance cultivator. 96′ x 30′ unheated greenhouse to supply seedlings for the rolling planting schedule. 4WD Same "mudder" tractor, a Bobcat loader, and a variety of other implements.

The Approach: The CSA was built right into the original farm plan. As Nigel observes, "It's not really a 'farmers' farm,' because we grow forty or fifty different vegetables and all kinds of fruit on 17 acres. It's more like a big garden, but with standard systems."

The broad diversity of crops required by CSAs makes them well suited to organic production. Although Eatwell does not technically need organic certification—they're not selling wholesale, and have more customers than they can serve—they farm according to CCOF standards, "to keep our options open," as they put it.

EVEN IN THE START-UP YEAR, CSAs HOLD THEIR OWN

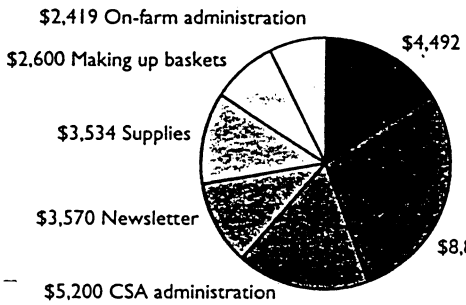
Marketing Costs for CSA & Farmers' Market Compared

Because Eatwell Farm runs a CSA and also sells at a farmers' market, it is possible to compare the costs of marketing by these two systems. This comparison ignores the costs of production, land, and equipment, since they are the same.

In its start-up year, the CSA has grown from 48 to 125 members. The farm is aiming for an eventual 200 subscribers, which they figure will about halve the costs of marketing and increase the profit margin.

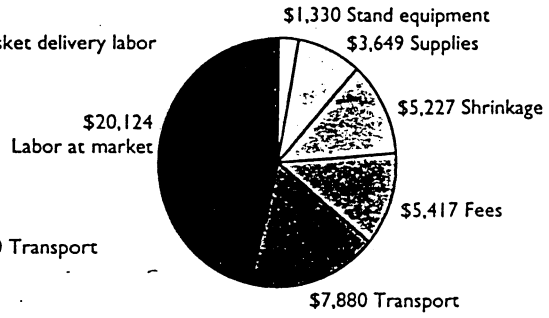
Over the last year, for each dollar earned by the CSA, Eatwell Farm spent 46 cents on marketing. During the same period, for each dollar earned at the farmers' market, Eatwell spent 42 cents on marketing.

CSA marketing costs are...



...46¢ of every dollar earned by the CSA.[1]

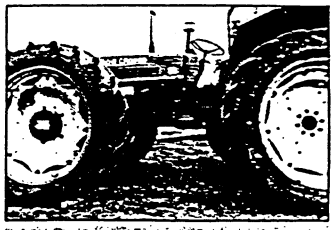
Farmers' market marketing costs are...



...42¢ of every dollar earned at the farmers' market.[1,2]

[1] Frances' & Nigel's labor is included in these costs at the rate they pay their workers to do the same job.

[2] The San Francisco Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market is exceptionally good from the growers' point of view. Customers are willing to pay for high quality, and vendors sell nearly all the produce they bring.



Start-Up Expenses

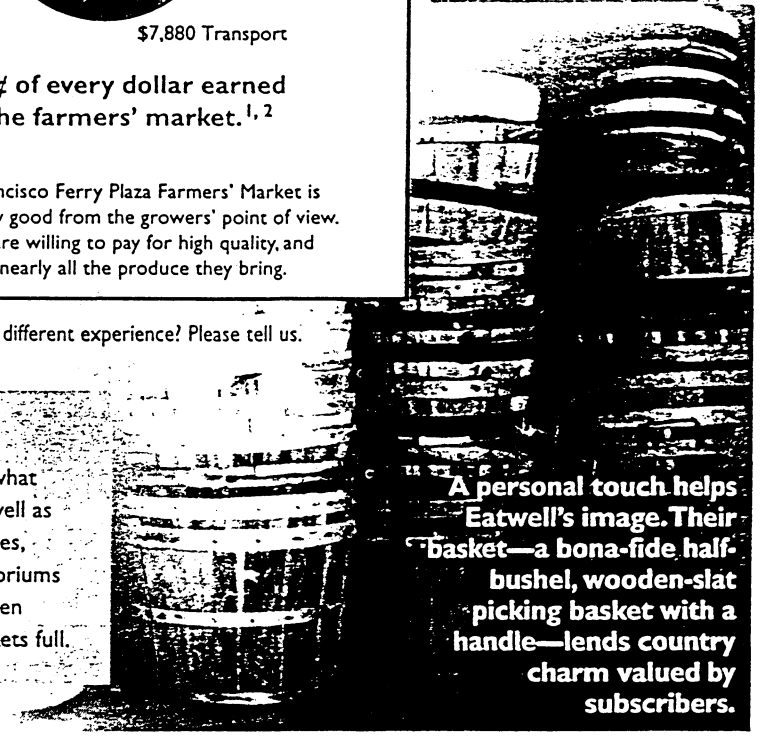
Profits may be particularly low in a CSA's start-up year, since farmers often must deliver to a relatively small number of members. Some expenses associated with beginning a CSA may not be repeated in later years:

- Brochure production
- Arranging drop-off places
- Finding the first customers
- Planning basket contents

We would love to hear your response to these figures. Does your CSA have a different experience? Please tell us.

"More Fruit! More Fruit!"

That's the feedback from Eatwell subscribers, and soon they'll get what they're asking for. Navel, Valencia, mandarin, and blood oranges, as well as lemons, grapefruits, apples, pears, asian pears, plums, apricots, cherries, nectarines, ten varieties of peaches, and hybrids called pluots and apriums will all begin bearing over the next few years. The varieties have been chosen to ripen successively over a long season to keep those baskets full.



A personal touch helps Eatwell's image. Their basket—a bona-fide half-bushel, wooden-slat picking basket with a handle—lends country charm valued by subscribers.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JACOB KATZ

For the Farmer

Filling the Boxes – Designing a CSA Crop Plan

Tomatoes, carrots, broccoli, corn – how much should I plant? What varieties should I choose? When and where do I plant each crop? These are the types of questions you'll face if you're thinking about starting a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project. They also apply to market gardeners and truck farmers selling either at farmers markets, or direct to retail or wholesale.

CSA projects are fast becoming a viable alternative for small-scale growers. In a CSA system, the grower recruits a group of shareholders who pledge to buy a portion of the farm's crop that season. This arrangement gives growers up-front cash to finance their operation and a first-hand connection to consumers. Besides receiving a weekly box of fresh, high-quality produce, shareholders also know that they're directly supporting a local farm. A CSA project can either supplement the grower's other marketing efforts, or serve as the operation's sole outlet.

Producing a consistent supply of a large diversity of fruits and vegetables is one of the keys to success – as well as one of the greatest challenges – facing any CSA farmer. Turning out an abundance of multiple crops through the course of the season requires an intimate knowledge of climate and seasonality. It's also important to understand the growth requirements of each of the crops, including irrigation needs, spacing, time to maturity, length of harvest, optimum temperature, what varieties do well in your area, fertility needs, pest and disease strategies, etc.

This is the kind of information experienced farmers and gardeners have at their fingertips. If you're just starting out, tapping into the local pool of knowledge will save you hours of time in making the many decisions you'll face.

A good place to start is your local farmers market – check out the crops and varieties available through the year, talk to growers, and see what sells well.

What Do You Want to Grow?

Let's assume you've already got a nice piece of ground. You've attracted an eager group of community members excited about the prospect of joining your CSA project – they're looking forward to a weekly bounty of fresh produce, not to mention the prospect of supporting local, seasonal food production and developing a relationship with the land steward(s).

Let's also assume you have a tractor or two, all of the necessary tillage, cultivation and planting devices, and a supply of water. In addition, you have the appropriate infrastructure for delivering shares and/or running a pick-up site at your farm, and a greenhouse or suitable propagation facility to produce an abundance of transplants for your production system. Now all you need is a crop plan.

When we started our CSA at the UC Santa Cruz Farm & Garden two years ago, we were already in the farming business, supplying local natural food stores and our own twice-weekly farm stand with a vast array of delicious, fresh, cosmetically delightful fruits and vegetables. For our operation, the transition to CSA was fairly straightforward. We started our crop planning exercise by creating a list of all of the crops we wanted to provide to our subscribers, with a column indicating availability during the year (see chart, next page).

Determine Varieties, Timing, and Placement

A CSA farming system is diverse, dynamic, and constantly evolving – it requires creativity and innovation at every step. Lots of time and careful thought should go towards selecting appropriate varieties for your crop

plan. This can best be accomplished by consulting with local experts and trialing as many varieties as possible. I never thought we could grow watermelon, tomatoes, cantaloupe, or eggplant in our cool, often fog-shrouded, marine-influenced Central Coast location, but through years of trials we've been able to select varieties of each of these crops that perform quite well here.

Once you've come up with a crop list and determined varieties, you then need to consider temperature requirements and appropriate planting dates for each of the crops. You also need to understand length of harvest period for each crop, as this will determine planting intervals. For example, you only need to plant garlic once, whereas to ensure a steady supply of carrots you might need to plant once a week. We used the weekly schedule (calendar method) for crops like broccoli, lettuce, carrots, and beets. For our corn and beans, I prefer to wait for emergence to signal the planting of the next succession. This method takes into account soil temperature as a factor in timing of germination, and ensures a uniform succession.

Developing a CSA crop plan will also hone your season extension skills. January plantings of cool season crops like cabbage, lettuce, peas, and carrots will get you off to a strong spring start (unless you've got snow on the

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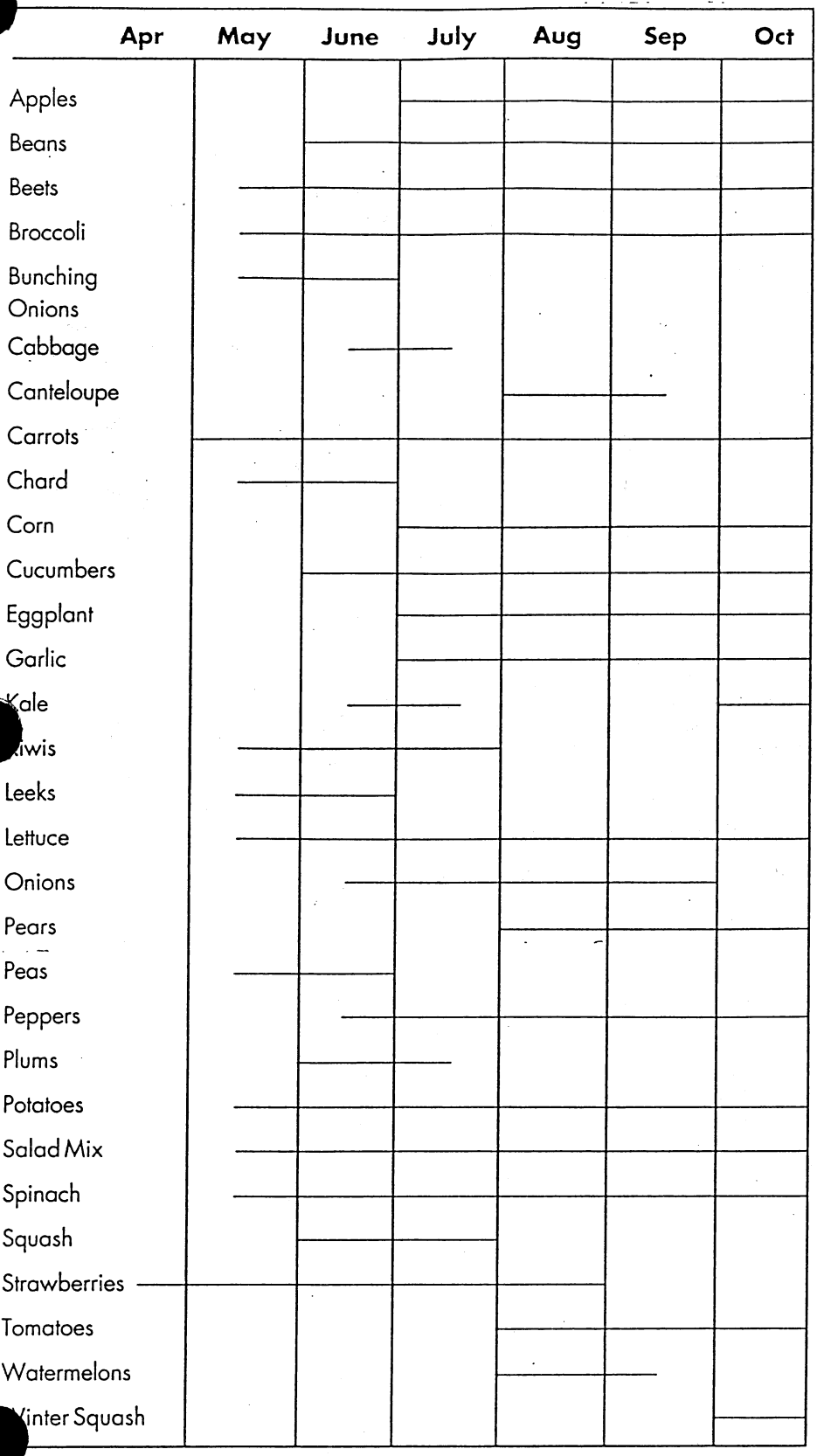

Chart of the UCSC Farm & Garden CSA project's crop list and harvest seasons. Note that the CSA season is designed to coincide with the 6-month Apprenticeship course.

ground). Storage crops like cabbage, potatoes, and winter squash will fill out the boxes nicely in the fall.

In designing your crop plan, it's important to consider days to maturity when deciding how crops are grouped in the field. In other words, you wouldn't want to plant fast-growing radishes next to slow-developing leeks, unless you have the ability to go in and re-form and re-plant beds easily. Instead, group crops that mature at approximately the same rate to simplify your harvest and re-planting tasks.

In addition to growth rates, the irrigation requirements of various crops will help determine crop placement. We were planting blocks of carrots, spinach, salad mix, beets, and broccoli, then setting them all up on t-tape (a type of drip system) for irrigation. Halfway through the season we watered one such block with overhead irrigation and realized the broccoli responded much better to this system, although the weeds generated were a problem in the carrots. This coming year we're considering putting broccoli in one block where it can be irrigated overhead. The beauty of trial and error.

In general, we've found it useful to have plenty of beds prepared well in advance of planting. This allows for pre-irrigation for good weed control. For direct-sown crops like carrots, it was very helpful to pre-irrigate and flame weed prior to planting. When this was done, we spent much less time hand weeding.

Calculate Quantities and Area to be Planted

Once you've decided what to plant, and when and where to plant it, the next step is to figure out how much of each crop to plant. The major limiting factor is the amount of land you have available. According to Jered Lawson, who coordinates the Community Alliance with Family Farmers' CSA West project, an acre of ground will produce crops for about 20 to 30 shares. The production system you choose will ultimately determine the number of shares an acre will support – if your production system involves intensively planted raised beds, relying heavily on the use of transplants and quick turn-around, you could produce more shares per acre than a system using direct sowings and tractor cultivation.

There are lots of resources that can help you determine how much of each crop to plant – these include publications such as *Knott's Vegetable Handbook, How to Grow More Vegetables,* Johnny's Selected Seeds catalogue, and others. Ultimately, experience through trial and error is the best method. For example, to supply our 60 shareholders with a weekly bunch of carrots, beets and spinach, and a bag of salad mix, we've found that planting 300-foot long double lines of each crop every 10 days will ensure a steady, abundant supply (note that each share is meant to feed four adults, or two strict vegetarians). For sweet corn, you can count on an ear per foot of row. For potatoes, you can use the rule of thumb that one pound of seed produces ten pounds of spuds.

I also suggest that you add 30% to account for crop loss due to factors beyond your control, and our experience suggests doubling of some crops over what you might expect on paper. We definitely will use this double rule next year for broccoli and lettuce.

Once you determine your crop needs based on area, you can work backwards to determine the seed requirements. It's important to have a good source of information giving amounts of seed required for 100 feet of row at a given spacing (e.g., Johnny's seed catalogue). This information is never absolute, so expect to either have too much seed or not enough. I always like to err on the side of too much – most seed, if stored well, will last until next season. If you're uncertain of the seed's viability you can do a simple germination test to determine percent germination. If in doubt, always use fresh, high-quality seed.

Your basic crop plan will determine space requirements as well. Some crops, such as sweet corn, take up more space than others. This is an area where innovation comes into play, especially in intensive systems, because you can intercrop to maximize space. For example, you might intercrop corn, pole beans and winter squash, allowing the beans to climb the corn stalks, and allowing the squash to sprawl in the understory. These intercropped systems don't always guarantee increased yields, but there can be other hidden benefits – such as weed and pest suppression – that might make them worth the effort.

Consider Soil Fertility Management

How you manage soil fertility will also affect your cropping plan. Besides the use of good quality compost, do you plan on cover cropping with legumes to add nitrogen, enhance microbial activity, and improve tilth? If so, do you plan to incorporate the biomass into the soil, or remove the cover crop and compost it for later application? If you choose the former, you need to consider both the tillage requirements and the time needed for decomposition to occur. If you choose the latter, you need to consider the labor and equipment requirements for cover crop removal, composting, and application.

In our situation here at the UCSC Farm, the area being used for CSA production is almost exclusively tractor tilled and cultivated. Because our apprenticeship training course runs April through October, and because we receive almost 40 inches of rainfall through the winter months, we have the luxury of cover cropping about 80% of our production area. When the ground dries adequately in the spring (usually by mid-April) we flail mow, then incorporate the standing covers into the soil and wait about two weeks for the initial breakdown before seedbed preparation.

To give us the ability to plant as early as possible in the spring, we set aside about an acre in the fall that is bedded-up and left fallow over the winter (no cover crop). This area will be our "early ground." This is not the optimum soil management strategy in heavy rainfall areas, as the soil can be prone to erosion (especially on sloped land). In addition, the rain tends to break apart surface soil aggregates, causing crusting. We mitigate this to some extent by planting a late summer cover crop (buckwheat) on this ground prior to bedding-up in the fall. Leaving the ground fallow over the winter will give us a good two- to three-week jump when compared to ground that is cover-cropped.

Besides cover-cropping over the winter, we also plant strawberries, intermediate-day onions, and garlic in the fall. We call this our "winter block" – it follows a perennial rye cover and is amended with compost prior to planting. As a weed control strategy, we pre-irrigate once or twice and follow up with cultivation or flame weeding prior to planting.

Start with a Simple Plan

Managing our CSA has been an exciting adventure, especially in terms of crop planning and attempting to keep the supply of vegetables and fruits both steady and interesting. I think the best advise I can give to entry-level farmers is to keep your crop plan fairly simple in your first year, and plan on doing one or two farmers markets to handle the excess.

Before launching into a CSA program, you might consider doing farmers markets exclusively for the first year or two to hone your production system. Then start with a small group of shareholders – 25 is a good goal for the first CSA season – and build from there as your skills and confidence grow.

As your CSA develops, one of the best sources of information on crop planning will come directly from your subscribers. Casual conversations on pick-up days are a great way to get feedback. Subscriber surveys, which many CSA farmers use, will also give you ideas for modifying your cropping plan.

CSA provides the closest link between consumer and producer short of those two being one and the same. With this close link there is a very strong desire on the part of most producers to put the best possible box of produce forward on pick-up day, and a good solid crop plan is one of the best ways to accomplish this. A good crop plan is a great recruitment tool as well, and a couple of years of experience goes a long way toward transforming ideas on paper to crops in a box. Good luck!

– Jim Leap
UCSC Farm Manager

Resources

Lorenz, O. and D. Maynard. *Knott's Vegetable Growers Handbook.* New York: Wiley & Sons, 1988.

Jeavons, John. *How to Grow More Vegetables (Fifth Edition).* Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1995.

Johnny's Selected Seeds Catalogue Available by calling 207/437-4301, or write Johnny's at Foss Hill Road, Albion, ME 04910-9731.

SAMPLE BUDGETS

The following are sample projected budgets from CSA cooperatives located in different parts of the country.

	Covelo, CA	Burlington, VT	Ann Arbor, MI	Kimberton, PA
INCOME				
Price/Share or total in shares	30 @ $325	109 @ $200	30,192	37,500
Sales to dairy	—	—	—	1,000
Interest	—	—	—	350
Grant	—	5,450	—	—
TOTAL INCOME	**$9,750**	**$27,250**	**$30,192**	**$38,850**
EXPENSES				
Part-time farmer	8,000	8,580	15,171	14,500
Apprentice(s)	500	8,400	1,200	3,900
FICA	—	630	1,959	1,250
Insurance	—	1,100	2,165	1,780
Relocation	—	300	—	—
Rent	—	—	4,000	2,600
Utilities	—	—	—	1,470
Office	55	—	360	500
Organic certification	75	100	—	—
Seeds and/or plants	200	700	500	1,800
Potting Soil/Propagation equip.	400	350	—	—
Well/irrigation	—	2,400	850	—
Irrigation equip. depr.	75	—	—	—
Greenhouse	—	1,000	—	—
Tools, maintenance, and repair	75	800	900	2,500
Tillage/maintenance for horses	250	—	—	—
Fertilizers	—	600	485	1,000
Season extenders	95	—	210	—
Sprays	—	300	—	—
Compost	25	1,100	—	—
Equip. and/or equip. rental	—	300	1,700	350
Packing Shed	—	200	—	—
Fuel	—	300	435	500
Capital payment	—	—	—	4,500
Communication & distribution	—	—	275	—
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$9,750**	**$27,160**	**$30,192**	**$38,850**

A CSA Production Planning Tool

by Stephen F. Moore

Every farmer is faced with deciding how much of what to plant and when. The decision is made more complex and difficult in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation because of the increase in diversity of crops grown and the goal of providing a consistent succession of harvests throughout the growing season. For example, the harvest plan at Moore Ranch (see Figure 1) calls for growing 30 or so items during a 12 month growing season. We expect some items to be included in every harvest share, e.g. carrots and lettuce, and some items, e.g. beets and turnips, are harvested regularly, but less frequently. It is a challenge to develop a planting plan to meet these kinds of harvest goals.

The planning tool described herein evolved from several year's experience with an informal "back of the envelope" approach, which too often resulted in undesirable differences between our CSA harvest plan and actual crop production. The key to developing a more systematic approach was recognizing an appropriate planning variable. In this case that variable is the *number of bed-feet to sow or plant* for each crop for each week of the growing season. The output of the planning process is a schedule or calendar showing how many bed-feet to plant each week for each crop.

Figure 2 shows an overview of the production planning process. After all of the necessary data is compiled, the computational details of working through this process are relatively straightforward, but greatly facilitated by using a computer spreadsheet program such as *Microsoft Excel*.

The first step in the process is to determine a weekly share plan. The information shown in Figure 1 can be expanded to produce a table (spreadsheet) showing how much of each item will be in each weekly share. Multiplying these numbers by the number of weekly shares, which may vary week-to-week, yields a weekly harvest plan. An excerpt from the weekly harvest plan for Moore Ranch is shown in Figure 3 for the months of February through April. Note the increase in expected shares from 230 to 250 shares starting in April.

A table like Figure 3 represents the farm production goal for the year. The purpose of the planning process is to develop a planting schedule to meet that goal. How many bed-feet of each crop must be planted each week to meet the production goal? This computation will depend

CROP	Est. Share Quan.	Freq. in Season	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Artichokes	3 chokes	W												
Basil	1 bu.	B												
Beans, green/yellow	1 b.	W												
Beets	1 bu.	B												
Broccoli	1 b.	B												
Cabbage	1 hd.	M												
Carrots	1 bu.	W												
Cauliflower	1 hd.	B												
Cilantro	1 bu.	M												
Corn	4 ears	W												
Cucumber	2	W												
Eggplant	2	B												
Garlic	1 hd.	W												
Kale	1 bu.	M												
Kohlrabi	1	M												
Leek	1 bu.	B												
Lettuce, leaf	1 hd.	W												

Figure 1. Moore Ranch Production Plan (partial).

on local characteristics for each crop and the bed layout of the individual farm.

The kind of basic crop data needed to make these computations is shown in Figure 5. Generally, this information is readily available, e.g., seed catalogs, Jeavons (*How to Grow More Vegetables;* 1995), and Lorenz and Maynard (*Knott's Handbook for Vegetable Growers;* 1988). Careful observation of actual crop performance allows each farmer to modify published data to reflect local growing conditions and methods. Figure 5 contains an example of data suitable for Moore Ranch conditions. The reader is discouraged from utilizing this data, as presented, without careful consideration of local conditions and farm practices.

Using the yield per row-foot (RF) and row per bed data from Figure 5, the weekly harvest plan (Figure 3) can be recomputed in terms of weekly bed-feet (BF) to harvest. For each cell in Figure 3 the following conversion can be made:

```
BF to Harvest = Harvest Amount +
 [[(Yield per RF) x (Number of Rows per Bed)]]
      Where BF = bed-feet and RF = row-foot
```

The results (not shown) are a spreadsheet similar to Figure 3, but the numbers generated represent the expected number of bed feet to harvest each week for each crop to meet the harvest share plan represented by Figure 1.

Estimating the bed-feet to plant from the number of bed-feet to harvest is somewhat more complicated, because of the many factors that can affect a crop from sowing to harvest. The basic data needed to make the calculations are given in Figure 4. If there are no significant losses between sowing and harvesting and if the crop is harvested in a single cutting, then the estimated number of bed-feet to harvest corresponds to the number of bed-feet to plant "W" weeks prior to harvest, where "W" is the time in weeks from planting to harvesting. (Note: For most crops "W" will vary seasonally.) For crops that are sown in flats and then transplanted out to beds, an adjustment must be made in the final plan to note the expected date to sow the flats. Any expected losses that occur during the growing season can be easily included in the calculation by increasing the bed-feet to plant by the percentage loss expected, as given in Figure 4. Finally, for "cut and come" crops that are harvested several times over a period of weeks, e.g. kale, a corresponding adjustment must be made in the plan.

An example of a portion of the production plan for Moore Ranch based on the foregoing considerations is shown in Figure 5. This final table is computer generated, but typically requires some manual adjustments. In practice, this table is used as a guide for what is actually planted in any given week. The actual number of bed-feet planted is usually rounded up to the nearest 25 feet. In addition, numerous other factors, such as weather conditions and availability of bed space, which are not easily included in the planning tool, also affect final planting decisions.

Deciding how much of what to plant and when is an important part of any farmer's management activities. The production planning model described herein has been extremely helpful in maintaining an orderly harvest for a relatively large CSA with a long growing season. Hopefully, other growers can benefit from and improve upon this planning tool.

Stephen F. Moore operates a highly successful biodynamic CSA in Southern California. He is also the president of the BDA.

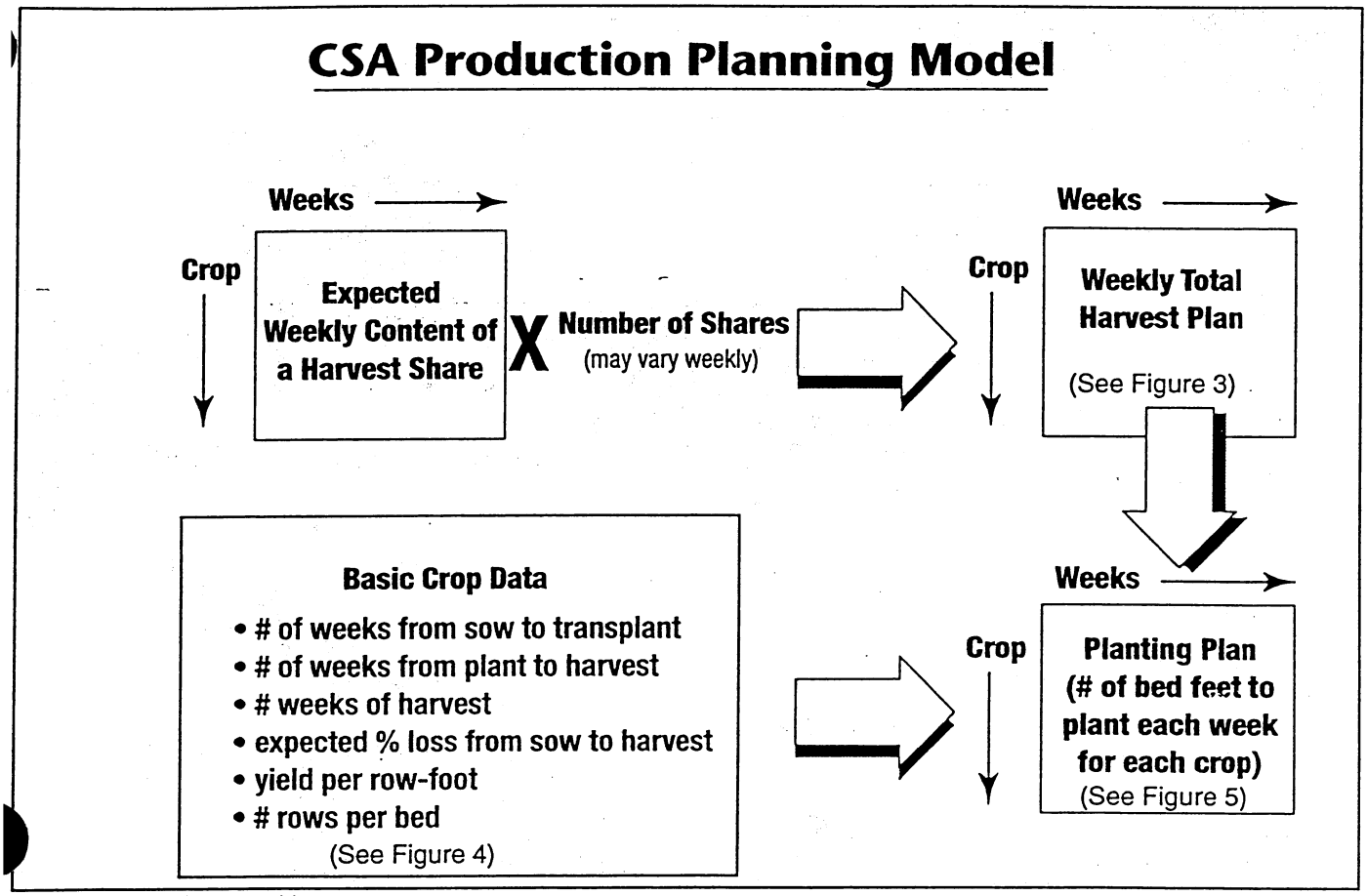

Figure 2. Production Planning Model.

CROP/Week	WEEKLY HARVEST PLAN											
	FEBRUARY				MARCH				APRIL			
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Artichokes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	810	810
Basil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beans, green/yellow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	135	135	135	135	270
Beets	230	0	250	0	250	0	270	0	270	0	270	0
Broccoli	230	250	0	250	0	270	0	270	0	270	0	270
Cabbage	0	250	0	0	0	270	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carrots	230	250	250	250	250	270	270	270	270	270	270	270
Cauliflower	230	250	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chard	230	250	0	250	0	270	0	270	0	270	0	270
Cilantro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cucumber	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eggplant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Garlic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	810	0	0

Figure 3. Moore Ranch Weekly Harvest Plan (partial). Quantities are number of units, e.g. pounds or bunches, of each item to harvest for the given week.

CROP / WEEK No.	NUMBER of BED-FEET to PLANT EACH WEEK										
	FEB				MAR				APR		
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Basil											
Beans, green/yellow					844				844		
Beets	267	139	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Broccoli	650	650	338	338	338	338	338	338	338	338	338
Cabbage											
Carrots	123	237	123	133	133	133	133	133	133	133	133
Cauliflower	329		357								
Chard	147										159
Cilantro											
Corn											318
Cucumber											
Kale			135								
Kohlrabi		282				159				159	

Figure 4. Partial example of production plan at Moore Ranch CSA.

CROP	UNITS	EXP % Loss	Yield per row-ft per week	Rows/ Bed	Harvest Period (weeks)	No. of Weeks Sow to TP	NUMBER of WEEKS from PLANTING to HARVEST											
							FEBRUARY				MARCH				APRIL			
							6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Basil	bunch	10	1	2	8	4											7	7
Beans, green	lb.	20	0.2	2	3						9	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Beets	bu.	20	0.75	3	1		14	12	12	10	10	8	8	8	7	7	7	7
Broccoli	lb.	20	0.5	2	1		15	13	13	13	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Cabbage	hd.	20	1	2	1		15	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Carrots	bu.	10	0.75	3	1		13	11	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	9	9	9
Cauliflower	hd.	30	0.5	2	1	4	12	12	12	12	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Chard	bu.	15	1	2	8		10	10	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	8	8
Cilantro	bu.	20	3	3	4												8	8
Corn	ears	15	4	1	1											11	11	11
Cucumber	no.	20	1	1	8													
Eggplant	no.	20	1	1	6	8												
Garlic	hd.	3	2	1														
Kale	bu.	15	1	2	6	4	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8				
Kohlrabi	no.	15	1	2	1	4	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Leek	bu.	10	0.75	3	1	4	11	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Lettuce, leaf	hd.	20	1.25	3	1		10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8
Melons	no.	40	1	1														
Onions	lb.	20	0.5	2	1	4	18	18	18	18	18							
Parsley	bu.	15	3	3	6	8	12	12	12	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Parsnips	bu.	25	0.25	2	1		18	18	18	18	18	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Potatoes	lb.	20	1	1	1							9	9	9	9	9	9	9

Figure 5. Example of basic crop data for selected crops and weeks (partial).

Eight Tips from the Experts to Make Your CSA Project a Success

by Amunda Salm

To me, ecological agriculture is a way of having more control over knowing where my food comes from because then I know that the methods of production reflect greater environmental responsibility. As a graduate student in Ecological Agriculture, I chose as my thesis topic to look at community shared agriculture (CSA), the strongest link between Canadians and their food unless one is producing oneself. I wanted to determine, ultimately, whether CSA provides consumers with greater access to information about where their food comes from, production methods and so on. To do this, in October and November of last year, I sent a socio-economic survey to all CSA producers on the list of the CSA Resource Centre in Wroxeter, Ontario, asking for their perspectives on this form of marketing. I also personally interviewed as many of these producers as possible in the vicinity of Ottawa and southern Ontario. The questionnaire tried to inventorise how CSA looks in Canada, and then to look at the various ways consumer members become involved in the farm beyond simply buying food. Forty current and six former CSA operators responded to the survey. All except two use organic methods, and over half are certified. A quarter of the responding growers choose CSA as their main marketing strategy, and three depend on it for their total household income. The membership base for this sample averaged 42 members, with the largest CSA having 112 members. Many interesting issues came up in this sample based on growers' experiences, and I have summarized the more pertinent findings in the form of advice to new producers. Since this study concentrated on the voices of growers, it would be interesting to see some research conducted among consumer members of CSAs in order to get their viewpoint on this marketing system.

Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) is an alternative local food system which first emerged in Canada in 1989. A direct link was set up between a specific group of consumers and one or more farmers to address two main problems: farmers bearing all the risks in food production and consumers needing more awareness of where their food comes from. In return for a weekly basket filled with whatever is harvestable at that time, most of the responding operators have members pay a lump sum in advance for a share in the season's harvest, although 13% prefer to work on a pay-as-you-order basis.

Here is what experienced CSA operators suggest to those considering this type of marketing. Quotes have been taken directly from the surveys.

1. *Talk to other CSA farmers*

The most helpful source of information for setting up a CSA comes from other CSA operators. In addition, it is best to experience farming (e.g., by apprenticing on a CSA or by market gardening) first in order to see if it suits your needs and abilities. Also, if you have very little growing experience, don't start right away with a CSA.

2. *Start small*

Many stressed that the best way to get into CSA is to start with a small group and to experiment for the first year to find a manageable cropping plan. "Realize the difference between farming and gardening; make sure you can do a 30-40 crop polyculture before you sign up 100 shares." Also important are capital ("You can't expect to make money from the start"), another source of income and long-term access to land.

3. *Be prepared to work very hard*

The first year is the hardest, but it gets easier with time; for example, with time members will spread the word to other potential customers about the CSA, and thus do your recruiting for you. In this sample, it was found that most of the workload in CSA is carried by the farmers and their families. Half of the CSAs receive some help from their members, averaging to 7% of the workload (varying from 0.5% to 40% of total workload). Two-thirds of the CSAs also depend on hired and nonmember volunteer labor contributions, averaging to 23% of the workload. When members contribute, they help in distribution, harvesting and outreach. Although having members experience the farm firsthand is part of the idea behind CSA, many of the farmers find that this requires a lot of their energy to organize. Some ideas were provided on how to get members to participate more: setting up compulsory work as part of every share (e.g., 2.5 days a season; one day of work or pay $25 for someone else to do it); setting up working shares for a reduced rate (a quarter reported at least one member joining in this way); linking participation to learning a skill (organic or food preservation workshops); or linking work with social activities (e.g., "weed & feed").

4. *Try to set up a core group*

Half of the CSAs had managed to set up a core group of members they can regularly consult, especially for help in times of heavy workload and outreach to members. For example, two members on one CSA took over all the tasks involved in providing a newsletter to members; another set up a committee to manage the garden's irrigation system. As a variation on a core group, another CSA (which works on a pay-as-you-order basis) has set up a rotating committee of members coordinating orders and drop-off outlets: "independently they need to figure out order details, and do the marketing for the farm themselves."

5. *Research consumer base in area*

One of the biggest problems was found to be distance to members. It is difficult to build up a strong membership base from the local communities. "Do some preliminary marketing

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research to ensure there is a market. We have had enormous amounts of publicity yet have only TWO local share-members out of over 100. It may not be feasible in very rural areas unless there's a city nearby to draw from" (3-year CSA). Also, "in some rural areas, if people are into organics, they will grow it themselves." One 7-year CSAer has even experienced adverse reactions to CSA and organics in his local farming community: "If you live in a conventional area, you confront hostility." When members are scattered in different locations, then a lot of time and finances become shifted towards transportation. And if members are far away, it is even more difficult to get them to become involved in the farm. One 5-year CSA operator stated that he finds communities with a high proportion of 25- to 35-year olds with children to be the best to target.

6. Depend on many marketing outlets

As mentioned above, most CSAers depend on various strategies to sell their produce. From a 6-year CSA: "Always grow a CUSHION of excess veggies, with some backup form of marketing for excess."

7. Try to carry on through the winter

In Canada, the CSA season is very short – 4 months on average in this sample. Very few (7 CSAs) offer produce as part of the CSA "deal" through the winter, and 6 others keep selling to members on a separate pay-as-you-order basis. Most CSAs concentrate on fresh vegetables and herbs, with less than half offering fruits/berries and storage crops. Very few offer other products such as flowers (8), value-added foods (8 – e.g., pesto, jam, maple syrup, etc.), chicken and eggs (3) within their CSA. As one 5-year CSAer states: "Don't stop during the winter – members forget about you – you should try to keep the CSA going once a month during the winter. There is enough organic stuff out there, fresh or for canning . . ."

8. Cooperate with other farmers

Many mentioned the difficulty of providing a wide diversity within such a short time. Sharing the risks with consumer members includes the risk of failed crops. Half of the responding CSAs keep to this principle, communicating difficulties to members. However, many are not comfortable with this concept and buy from or exchange with other farmers to supplement losses. Three of the responding CSAs include more than one farmer/farm working for a common membership base, which reduces the stress of a wide cropping plan and allows for more flexibility in times of crop failures. The drawbacks would be less of a personal connection between members and a farm, as well as a less diverse (and possibly sustainable) farm system.

What of members?

All but one CSA operator responded that awareness about agriculture/food issues is raised amongst their members. Also, most (37) find that members are at least a bit interested in being involved in joint decisions about food distribution, outreach and problem solving. None of the responding farmers found that they had less control over their work when compared to other marketing strategies. In fact, they provided many examples of positive solutions coming from discussions with their members (e.g.: loans, suggestions on how to make distribution system more efficient, members taking on tasks, accepting that crop appearance might be affected by weather or pests, etc.). "A lot more things become possible when a group of people get a little enthusiasm for past success (i.e., a good harvest year) and start to take some ownership or responsibility for the future success of something like this. In other words, they seem to get better as they mature." (7-year CSA).

One of the conclusions of this study was that there is a need to establish a strong network of CSA in Canada in order to share information and experiences better. The CSA Resource Centre has recently moved to Ecological Agriculture Projects (EAP), just outside Montreal. If you would like to get more information on CSA or a longer version of this study, contact:

Ecological Agriculture Projects
McGill University, Macdonald Campus,
Ste Anne de Bellevue QC H9X 3V9
phone (514) 398-7771
fax (514) 398-7621
e-mail <eap@agradm.lan.mcgill.ca>
web site <http://www.eap.mcgill.ca>

Ω

Amunda Salm recently completed an MSc degree in Ecological Agriculture at Wageningen University in Holland, in a coordinated effort with Macdonald College of McGill University. This article is a summary of thesis research conducted in Canada. Amunda would like to operate a CSA in Canada one day.

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Available online at: http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/smllfarm.pdf
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USDA School Lunch Program
This USDA sponsored program encourages schools to purchase produce from local farmers. An example is the New North Florida Farmers Cooperative.
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Cornelius Blanding, Marketing Director
Ph: (404) 765-0991
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New York Harvest for NY Kids Week
This week, designated each year by the NY state assembly, is designed to encourage children, their schools and their families to purchase, consume and learn about local foods and agriculture.
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NYS Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Room 547 Capitol
Albany, NY 12248.
Ph: (518) 455-5203.
Email: sternr@assembly.state.ny.us

Restaurant Supported Agriculture
By Marc Johnson – Farming Alternative Program Intern working with Cornell Cooperative Extension NYC
This product provides general information on Restaurant Supported Agriculture.
Available from www.cals.cornell.edu/dept/ruralsoc/fap/fap.html

14 Tips to Increase Restaurants Sales
A one-page leaflet showing tips and resources.
Available from Future Harvest-CASA at
www.futureharvestcasa.org
Future Harvest-CASA
106 Market Court
Stevensville, MD 21666
Ph: 410-604-2681

Amazing Grazing Directory
Future Harvest-CASA organization
The purpose of this project is to help farmers raising grass fed animals gain access to customers, and to educate consumers about locally produced, healthier food choices. This will be achieved through a directory of MD, VA, and WV graziers and their products, that will be distributed to consumers and restaurants. If you are a grazier in those areas you may ask to be included in the directory.
Website www.futureharvestcasa.org
Future Harvest-CASA
106 Market Court
Stevensville, MD 21666
Ph: 410-604-2681

What's Cooking in Your Food System?: A Guide to Community Food Assessment
Helpful to anyone interested in learning about an innovative tool to understand and influence food issues in their community.
More information available at
www.foodsecurity.org

Supplying Craft Breweries with Locally Produced Ingredients
Prepared by Food Processing Center
Institute of Agricultural and Natural Resources
University of Nebraska- Lincoln
Available at: http://www.foodmap.unl.edu/index.asp

Small/School Meals Initiative: Town Hall Meetings: A Step-by-Guide on How to Bring Small Farms and Local Schools Together
USDA/FNS
For information contact
USDA's Food and Nutrition Service
Communications and Governmental Affairs
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302
703-305-2000
www.fns.usda.gov/fns

How Local Farmers and School Food Sedrvice Buyers Are Building Alliances: Lessons Learned from the USDA Small Farm/School Meals Workshop, May 1, 2000.
This report summarizes the education highlight so the workshop attend by 180 school food service directors throughout the nation. They explored how they might be able to establish local farmer relationships and other businesses in their communities.
For more information contact
Debra Tropp
USDA-AMS-TMP-MTA
Room 1211-S
1400 Independence Ave, SW

Washington, DC 20250
Ph: 202-690-1303

Farm Fresh: Chefs head to local farmers markets
By Beth Panitz, published in Restaurants USA, October 1999.
Article discusses freshness of local foods and interviews with chefs and others involved in direct marketing.
Available in Resource Manual or website
www.restaurant.org/rusa/magarticle.cfm?articleid=233

NC Fresh Connection
NC Fresh Connection is a campaign by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services that works by linking buyers with NC produce growers, cooperatives and processors across the state who can supply seasonal fruits and vegetables.
http://www.ncagr.com/freshconnect/index.htm

The Food Alliance
Food Alliance is a non-profit organization that promotes sustainable agriculture by recognizing and rewarding farmers who produce food in environmentally friendly and socially responsible ways, and educating consumers and others in the food system about the benefits of sustainable agriculture. The Food Alliance is an independent third party that endorses farms that meet their strict requirements by allowing them to carry their seal of approval. Their standards include, conserving soil and water, pest and disease management and human resources. They also publish a quarterly newsletter, promote direct buying to consumers, restaurants and institutions and hold an annual conference. They have established a BRAND that consumers want to buy.
FOOD ALLIANCE
1829 NE Alberta, # 5
Portland, OR 97211
Tel. 503.493.1066
info@foodalliance.org
Website: www.thefoodalliance.org.

NC Fresh Connection
NC Fresh Connection is a campaign by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services that works by linking buyers with NC produce growers, cooperatives and processors across the state who can supply seasonal fruits and vegetables.
http://www.ncagr.com/freshconnect/index.htm

Local Harvest
This website allows consumers all over the country to search for community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers' markets, farm stands, and U-pick farms in their area.
www.localharvest.org

Earth Pledge
It is a non-profit organization that has a web site that connects New York state producers with consumers and food professionals. For information go to the website www.farmtotable.org or contact
Sarah Kelley
122 E. 28th St
New York, NY 10016
Ph: 508-647-8363
skelley@earthpledge.org
www.earthpledge.org

Small Holders' Alliance
The Small Holders' Alliance supports Massachusetts small farmers, homesteaders, backyard farmers, and all those interested in purchasing food directly from the farm on which it was produced. Their website provides news and information on livestock care.
Website: http://www.smallholdersalliance.org/

UPick.com
This website offers a free listing of producers.
http://upick.com

Four Corners Ag.
The Online Agriculture Marketplace
This website is an online medium for buying, selling, trading, or simply just locating regional agricultural products and services.
Available at: http://www.4cornersag.com/

Community Harvest
Community Harvest is a nonprofit organization working to create a more local, sustainable food system in the Washington DC region.
Website: http://www.goodfooddc.net/community.htm
2437 15th St., NW
Washington, DC 20009
Ph: (202) 667-8875
Email: communityharvest@mindspring.com

FoodMAP
This website provides marketing and processing information on identifying new markets, learning about alternative agriculture opportunities, locating processing equipment, understanding processing requirements and ingredients
http://www.foodmap.unl.edu/index.asp

Slow Food USA
A recently formed organization that has grown by leaps and bounds. Slow Food USA is reminded of how we must reawaken the connection to the agricultural foundation on which this great country was built. There are several Slow Food Convivia (chapters) in

the USA. Check out the website for location and local leaders. They promoting the purchase of local foods directly from the farmer.
Slow Foods USA
434 Broadway, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10013
212-965-5640
email: info@slowfoodusa.org
www.slowfood.org

Oklahoma Food Cooperative
It a new organization promoting the connection of farmer and consumer. To see their accomplishments go to:
www.oklahomafood.org

North Carolina Schools Food Purchases
Show the quantity of food purchased from NC farmers.
www.ncagr.com/fooddist/farm-to-school.htm

Linking Farmers with Schools
There are three 4-page Extension publication on linking farms and schools and other food services. The publication are targeted to producers. Look for publications 1853 a,b,c.
Available online: www.exnet.iastate.edu/publications
Hardcopies available by contacting
www.pubdist@exnet.iastate.edu and include request number 1853a and a complete mailing address.

Chefs Collaborative
It is a national organization of chefs that promote local, artisanal and sustainable cuisine. They are very proactive in purchasing quality fresh foods from local producers. They sponsor local conferences that help connect farmers and chefs.
National Office:
262 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
Ph: 617-236-5200
www.chefscollaborative.org

Food Circles
Missouri communities promote food circles. They are groups of local consumers and producers working together to get fresh, local, quality food available to consumers and sustain producers. Local directories are published to promote this connection.
More information available from
Missouri Alternatives Center
Debi Kelly
University of **Missouri**:
3 Whitten Hall,
Columbia, MO 65211

Call: 1-800-433-3704
www.agebb.missouri.edu/mac

New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Association
This is an example of many state organizations that help promote the marketing and purchasing of locally grown foods.
www.nysfdma.com

Regional Farm and Food Project
It is a regional direct marketing effort. They publish a regional directory of producers. For more information, contact
Tracy Frisch, Director
148 Central Avenue, 2nd floor
Albany, NY 12206
Ph: 518-427-6537
Email: farmfood@capital.net

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
They put a very plain listing of certified organic farms statewide. Farms are listed by county. The website lists farms and enables one to search for farms in your county. For more information, contact
Sarah Johnston
Executive Director
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
661 A Lansing Road
Fultonville, NY 12072
Ph: 518-922-7937

Fresh From the Farm
Pick your State or Province and enter to find pick-your-own farms, family fun farm outings, fresh farm fruit and vegetable markets and agricultural events, all close to where you are. You're just a click away from where the air is sweeter, the folks are friendlier and time is marked by the seasons. This is designed to connect producers with customers for food, fiber, fun and education. The goal is to have it self sustaining. Go to:
www.freshfromthefarm.com

Food Routes Inc.
Food routes has launched a website to promote locally grown foods. It can be checked out at
www.foodroutes.org or call Joani Walsh at 814-349-6000 for more information.

Farm to School listserv
Cornell is developing a listserv for farm to school. Contact Aleta Coggin for more information at afc23@cornell.edu or 607-255-2142. It can be checked out at www.cce.cornell.edu/farmtoschool

USDA

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

February 2000

Innovative Marketing Opportunities for Small Farmers: Local Schools as Customers

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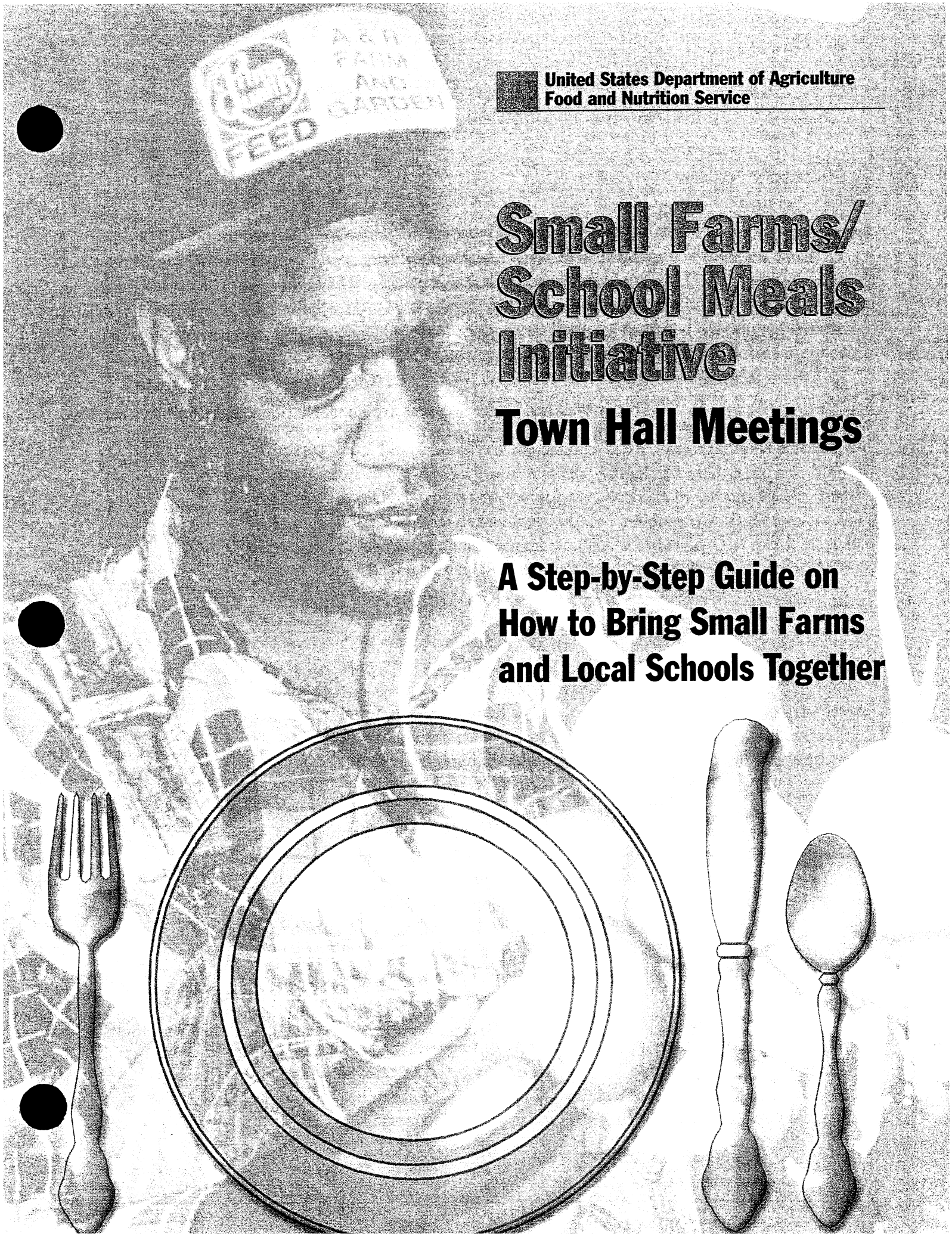
Summary

Small farmers in the United States are declining in number and experiencing economic difficulty. Within that group, the number of African-American farmers has dramatically decreased since 1910, when 1 million African-American farmers owned 15 million acres of land. In 1998, fewer than 20,000 African-American farmers owned 2 million acres.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the West Florida Resource Conservation and Development Council (WFRCDC), and the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project, Florida A&M University (FAMU) have worked together on this pilot project to create marketing opportunities for limited-resource growers. The cooperators used *A Time to Act,* the report produced by USDA's National Commission on Small Farms, as a guide. A group of small farmers in the Florida Panhandle organized into the New North Florida Cooperative and established a location in Marianna, FL, 70 miles west of Tallahassee. The Cooperative recognized a considerable opportunity in serving local school districts with fresh agricultural products. This pilot project has made substantial progress over the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school years.

The Cooperative overcame initial difficulties, including lack of organization, economic difficulties, social attitudes, existing customer preferences, and lack of equipment. Realizing that effective organization was critical, these limited-resource growers formed a management team as a governing body. The management team addressed problems and handled day-to-day business activities in a unified, methodical way. The Cooperative acquired capital and purchased necessary startup equipment, such as a refrigerated trailer, cutting machines, and wash sinks.

The Cooperative developed a good working relationship with the Food Service Director for the Gadsden County School District by providing high-quality produce, prompt deliveries, fair prices, and courteous professionalism. The vending experiences over the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school years were positive steps for the Cooperative in building a long-term, reputable business. The Cooperative's main product was fresh-cut, leafy greens, but watermelons, strawberries, blackberries, and muscadine grapes were also sold. Word-of-mouth advertising has portrayed the Cooperative as a reputable vendor and opened doors of opportunity in other school districts, including Jackson, Leon, and Walton Counties.



United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

Small Farms/ School Meals Initiative

Town Hall Meetings

A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Bring Small Farms and Local Schools Together

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The following was written by Marc Johnson, a Farming Alternatives Program Intern working with NYC Cooperative Extension. Your comments and feedback are welcome. Thank You Marc!

JG

Restaurant Supported Agriculture(RSA)

Marc Johnson, Cornell Cooperative Extension NYC

What is Restaurant Supported Agriculture(RSA)?

RSA is the facilitation of direct connections between farmers and restaurants, eliminating the need for food distributors to move foods from farms to the doors of restaurants. Using this principal, restaurants buy directly from farmers; the deliveries are then made by the farmer or a third party in the neighborhood.

Who does it benefit?

RSA is set up to benefit the farmer, the restaurant and the consumer. The farmer gains a new market to sell his/her products in; the restaurant has access to a higher quality, fresher, and often cheaper product; and the consumer eating at a participating RSA restaurant has access to a higher quality, more nutritious product, at nearly the same price they are accustomed to paying.

It benefits the community in which the restaurant resides, as well as the region, because money is kept within the region-rather than being distributed across the country or even the world as produce often comes from places far away from the restaurants that purchase it. By eliminating the distributors-who typically buy their products from outside of the region and sell them to restaurants, pay to have them transported from out-of-state, and have the products unnecessarily prepackaged-it's easy to see why RSA is a more efficient, cost-effective and ecological way for restaurants to buy their food.

How does it work?

The operation of RSA is very simple. First, a farmer puts out a weekly list of products(along with the units and prices of each product) he/she is currently growing. The restaurant owner or cook then decides

what they want to order, and they call the farmer with an order. On a prearranged day each week, usually set by the farmer, the orders are driven into a central location near the restaurants. The produce is usually picked in the morning, put into wooden crates, and sent down to the pickup site that same day; the wooden crates are then returned to the farmer for the next delivery.

Each individual order is then delivered to restaurants by residents living nearby that location, or by the farmer himself. In this way, community members can get more involved in neighborhood business and interact with fellow community members that they might not otherwise see or talk to.

What are the disadvantages?

The problems with RSA mainly concern the establishment of the connections between the farmer(s) and restaurant(s). Another disadvantage is that if a restaurant were to rely solely on the RSA for its produce, it would have to plan its menu around the produce available for each month or week. In addition, since small scale farms that serve as the supplier for the RSA are affected easily by varying weather conditions throughout the season, sometimes projected harvests for certain weeks are not met.

What are the advantages?

The advantages of RSA far outweigh the disadvantages. RSAs give restaurants-and ultimately the consumers-access to higher quality, fresher, more nutritious, local produce. Transportation expenses are smaller due to the fact that the produce comes directly from local farmers without the use of a distributor("jobber"), which translates into lower prices for the produce. The prices are reduced even further due to the fact that the produce coming from the farms is not pre-packaged like much of the food coming from other places is. In other words, restaurants(and the consumers) can get a higher quality, generally cheaper product from within their region using an RSA.

Origin of RSA

The origins of RSA evolved from the widely successful CSA(Community Supported Agriculture) sites that have been in operation for several years in the US and abroad. In a CSA, residents of a community buy "shares" in a farmer or farmers' harvest for a season. Each week, depending on how large a share has been bought and availability of produce, each CSA member receives a quantity of produce from the farm(s). The produce is brought to a central drop-off point once or twice a week for pickup by each CSA member. Not only do the CSA members gain access to higher quality, more nutritious produce, the CSA also fosters community interaction since CSA members come together each week at the drop-off point to pick up their share of the harvest. With the success of CSAs, and the underlying principal that higher quality, cheaper produce can be obtained locally, Cornell Cooperative Extension of NYC, along with Just Food of NYC, the Farming Alternatives Program at Cornell University, El Puente(a community organization in Williamsburg), and Neil O'Malley(a chef in Williamsburg), began developing a pilot project in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. They modeled the project after the CSA idea as well as from the ideas of a group called the Chef's Collaborative 2000-which "promotes sustainable cuisine by teaching children, supporting local farmers, educating one another, and inspiring the public to choose good, clean food"(CC2000).

Representing, Educating and Promoting the Restaurant/Hospitality Industry

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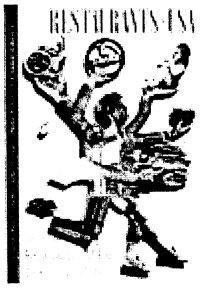
Farm Fresh

***Restaurants USA*, October 1999**



October 1999 issue

Chefs head to local farmers markets

By Beth Panitz

Bright red tomatoes bursting from the summer sun. Pinkish-brown potatoes with dirt still clinging to them. Peppers in every color and size — plump, yellow ones; thin, pointy, red ones; lush, green ones.

It's 9 a.m. on a Sunday in August, and chef Nora Pouillon has come to Washington DC's Freshfarm Market to purchase the best produce available for her two restaurants, Restaurant Nora and Asia Nora. "On a Sunday morning, you wake up, you get out of bed, you go to the market, and you're surrounded by beautiful flowers and foods," says Pouillon. "It's a wonderful inspiration to see what's fresh."

The Freshfarm Market blooms every Sunday morning from May through December in a closed-off street and parking lot near Washington's Dupont Circle. Representatives from about 20 local farms — in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania — arrive early in the morning with fresh produce and flowers, setting up shop at individual stands. By 9 a.m., the market is bustling. Locals sample cucumbers and peaches before buying them; purchase freshly cut scarlet and gold zinnias to brighten their homes; walk their dogs through the hustle and bustle; and point out the diversity in tomatoes to their small children. Meanwhile, restaurateurs such as Pouillon pick and choose produce that is sure to delight their guests' taste buds.

A funny thing happened on the way to the market

Farmers markets date back to ancient times, says Mimi Sheraton, co-author with Nelli Sheffer of *Food Markets of the World*. In ancient Greece, farmers hawked their wares at the agora; in Rome, the forum was the place to go. In Europe, farmers markets have long been an essential part of life, with towns sprouting up around markets, she says. Even today, markets are commonplace in France, where locals shop for the freshest cheese, fish and produce for that day's dinner.

As for the United States, markets here date back to Colonial days. "A bunch of farmers would get together at a central location and sell their wares," says Sheraton. New Orleans' French Market and Boston's Haymarket have both been in operation since the 18th century, she says. Nevertheless, the United States has emerged more as the

country of the supermarket than of the farmers market. Recently, though, there's been a resurgence in U.S. farmers markets. Today, the nation boasts 2,746 farmers markets, according to 1998 data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That's up 55 percent from 1,755 markets in 1994.

Founded in 1997, Washington DC's Freshfarm Market is among the new crop of markets sprouting up. Pouillon herself sowed the seeds for the market. "I went to New York to the Union Square Greenmarket. I realized how busy it was in the middle of the city. I thought we could do that here," she says. She passed on the idea to her friend Ann Harvey Yonkers — a chef and farm owner — who started the market under the umbrella of the American Farmland Trust, a Washington DC-based organization that works to stop the loss of productive farmland. Yonkers has nurtured the idea into a successful and growing market.

Farmers markets fit with the current trend toward serving local, in-season produce — a movement referred to as "sustainable cuisine." Renowned chefs Pouillon, Alice Waters of Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, and Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger, hosts of the Food Network series "Too Hot Tamales" and co-owners of the Border Grill in Santa Monica, California, and Ciudad in Los Angeles, all subscribe to this philosophy.

"It used to be a mark of a fine restaurant to be able to get anything any time of year. 'We have raspberries flown in — how decadent,'" says Amy Bodiker, program director of Chef's Collaborative 2000, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a nationwide network of chefs dedicated to advancing sustainable food choices. Today's chefs realize that flying in raspberries from Central America requires much more fossil fuel than using fruits grown locally, she says.

Eating locally grown foods also seems to make sense, says Milliken. "On a real basic level, it almost seems like you live in a certain part of the world, you should eat things that are grown in that neighborhood at that time of the year," she says. "It might be something bigger than us that's driving all this."

Furthermore, the food is fresher and the variety is greater at farmers markets today, adds Feniger. Farmers generally come to the market within 24 hours of harvesting their produce; they also offer rare heirloom varieties of vegetables that are not available commercially. "You don't have to come up with all sorts of fancy ways to cook food when it's that perfectly delicious when you buy it," says Feniger. "You can do a lot less with it and the customer's experience is going to be better."

Waters — who fell in love with farmers markets during a visit to Europe when she was 19 — swears by such markets for produce for her restaurant Chez Panisse. "It's so meaningful to buy something that's beautiful and inspiring and that I like to cook," she says. "This is a delicious experience. Once you get hooked, you're hooked. It's very hard to resist the experience. You can't find the same kind of food anywhere else. So you become very dependent. And you go even when it rains.

"It's a very anonymous thing when food comes in these boxes from very far away and you don't know how they're grown and how people are taking care of the land," she says. "I like to know who is growing my food. I want to know where it comes from. And I want to support those people who are really trying to nourish me."

To market, to market

On this hot — but less humid than usual — August morning, Pouillon goes from stand to stand at the Freshfarm Market looking for items she needs. Tomatoes are first on her shopping list. "We got busier than expected this week. We sold 350 pounds of tomatoes in a week," she says. She buys 40 pounds of tomatoes from one vendor — half plum, half regular. "I'll use the plum tomatoes for gazpacho. They have more pulp, so they make a thicker soup," she explains. She'll use the other tomatoes for a fresh cold-tomato salad she serves over hot pasta.

Pouillon purchases 20 pounds of orange plum tomatoes from another vendor — clearing out its supply. She'll use those in her "Veal Scaloppine With Orange Plum-Tomato Sauce and Capers." The young woman working at the stand happily sells the last of the plum tomatoes to Pouillon, but that's not always the case. Another vendor won't sell her salad greens in bulk. "They don't want to disappoint their other customers. This is really for the community," explains Pouillon.

At another stand, she eyes some bright-red, shiny Thai Dragon Chilies. "I would love to have a box of those, but I'm organic so I can't," she laments. In April, Restaurant Nora became the first U.S. restaurant to be certified organic — meaning that 95 percent of its ingredients are organic. Pouillon says she rarely buys nonorganic vegetables, "because I already have to make exceptions for other things like curry powder that you can't find organic." At the market, she looks for signs identifying organic farmers.

In about an hour's time, Pouillon spends approximately $100 at the market. In addition to the tomatoes, she buys sweet Italian peppers and hot peppers for her salsa and gazpacho; okra, which she'll pickle and use to accompany her Maryland-style crab cakes, and a bag of salad greens.

Instead of going to the produce at a farmers market, the produce now typically comes to Pouillon. Because of the quantity of food needed to stock her two restaurants, farmers deliver produce and other items to her kitchen door two to three times a week. Her vegetables and fruits come from more than 50 different farmers, some of them — including one that sells at the Freshfarm Market — are part of a cooperative in Pennsylvania.

Likewise, Tim Kelley, executive chef at Seattle's The Painted Table and a big advocate of the city's Pike Place Market, buys most of his produce from farmers who deliver. Nevertheless, he visits the market once or twice a week. "Initially, I went there to make contacts," he says, noting that he found several of his vendors that way. He's uncovered some real treasures, such as Susan the Sprout Woman, who sells about 20 sprout varieties, including sunflower, corn and mustard, and Bob the Mushroom Guy, "who cultivates the most perfect oyster

mushroom," says Kelley.

"Mostly I go there for inspiration," he says. "I go there to escape the restaurant...It's hard to sit in the office or in the kitchen and think of things. You see the different vegetables, and in your mind you begin to draw lines between them. For example, I might see strawberries and rhubarbs and start to think of combinations of the two." One market trip inspired his "Foie Gras Terrine," which features a rhubarb marmalade containing strawberries and oranges. Sometimes he'll purchase items at the market; at other times he'll note that something is in season, and he'll order it that day or the next.

Barbara Stutz, manager of the Laughing Planet Cafe in Bloomington, Indiana, shops the local farmers markets for fresh produce for her weekly burrito specials. "Last week we had an 'Indiana Home-Grown Burrito' with fresh sweet corn that we take off the cob and basil, which is plentiful now. It also has zucchini and green peppers, which are just coming into season," she reports in mid-August. "We generally don't rely on the market for our staples like onion and cilantro. We go through 25 to 40 pounds of onions every day; we don't want to have to schlep that from the market."

Spreading the word

Because of their need to order in bulk, restaurateurs usually buy only a small amount of their produce directly from a farmers market. However, some of them are also promoting farmers markets to the crowd they're aimed at — individual consumers.

For example, Kelley offers walking tours of the Pike Place Market. During an hour walking tour, he leads his group through stalls of fresh cherries, apples and strawberries and past vendors who hurl fleshy salmon into the sky and catch them on their way down. "I try to show them the whole cooking process," says Kelley. "I point out that it doesn't begin with the chef but with the farmer and what the farmer grows."

After the market tour, the group heads to The Painted Table restaurant in the Alexis Hotel. Kelley conducts a 30-to-40-minute cooking demonstration, making some basic vegetable-based recipes, such as asparagus juice, tomato water and rhubarb soup. After the demonstration, the group enjoys a lunch prepared by Kelley and his staff.

Other chefs promote farmers markets by conducting cooking demonstrations at the markets. For example, Milliken and Feniger recently appeared at the Santa Monica Market, demonstrating how to make squash-flower quesadillas and Spanish gazpacho. This spring, Pouillon showed onlookers at the Freshfarm Market how to make "Asparagus and Country Mushroom Salad" and "Asparagus Soup With Chive Flowers and Light Cream."

Markets bloom with inspiration

On this August Sunday market trip, at 11 am, Laurie Alleman, pastry chef at Washington DC's Galileo Restaurant, demonstrates how to use

fresh peaches. Using a portable burner, she shows the crowd how to cook the peaches in a saucepan over low heat until they're nearly translucent and perfect to mix with cream, milk and sugar for creamy gelato.

"I totally support farmers markets," says Alleman. "They're the only way you can get really fresh produce. I go every Saturday and every Sunday."

By noon, Alleman has finished her demonstration and market shoppers are sampling her "Italian Roasted Peaches With an Amaretti Topping and Peach Gelato" — a delectable dessert oozing with the taste of sweet, fresh peaches. Meanwhile, the shopping continues as the amount of produce begins to dwindle. By 1 p.m., the market is like a daylily closing up for the evening. The crowds clear out, the farmers pack up what's left of their produce, and the area is transformed back into a street and parking lot — until next weekend, when the market will bloom again.

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Beth Panitz is an assistant editor at the National Restaurant Association.

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Amazing Grazing Directory
www.futureharvestcasa.org

Find your local sources for steaks, ground beef, leg of lamb, sausage, bacon, eggs, smoked hams, roasting chickens, handmade cheeses, goats' milk fudge, cheese-stuffed pasta, Thanksgiving turkeys, Christmas geese, and more — all fresh from the pasture! This directory lists grass-based farms in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia that sell their products directly to consumers.

Why should you consider making local, grass-fed products part of your diet?

1. Safe Food

Consumer concerns over food safety and quality are fueling demand for pasture-raised farm products. Animals raised on pasture, without any animal products in their diet, have no risk of carrying bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), sometimes referred to as Mad Cow disease. In addition, research shows that grass-based products — meat, poultry, milk, cheese, eggs — have health benefits for consumers when compared with grain–fed animal products. Benefits include less fat, fewer calories, more omega-3 fatty acids, more Conjugated Lineolic Acid (CLA), more beta carotene, and a lower occurrence of potentially dangerous *E. coli* bacteria. Increased levels of CLA and omega-3 fatty acids have been linked with decreased risks of cancer, diabetes, some types of immune system disorders, and cardio-vascular disease. Lowering fat and calories can have a positive impact on cardiovascular health and obesity. Increased vitamin A, through beta-carotene, helps maintain healthy skin and vision. Additional health benefits accrue when animals are raised without the addition of growth hormones, antibiotics, or pesticides. For more information on the health benefits of grass-fed products, see www.eatwild.com.

2. Local Farms and Farmers

Your food purchases can have a big impact on the landscape around you. Small, family-run farms, a cherished part of our landscape in the Chesapeake Bay region, are being lost at an alarming rate. But farms don't have to slip into oblivion. They can remain vital parts of our communities. We just have to take a few actions to support them. The best way to support small farms is to buy their products. When we do, we become connected to the landscape that surrounds us- connected to where our food comes from, what our neighbors are doing, the state of the land, and the health of the water. These connections are becoming harder and harder to find in our busy lives. Yet we can help renew them, with a bit of research, for the price of roasting chickens and ground beef. When was the last time shopping did that?

3. Environmental Benefits

Animals raised in a conventional system eat grain that is often grown with fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. Conventionally tilled cropland is also susceptible to soil erosion and nutrient and chemical runoff. In addition, raising grain for feed often requires a significant fossil fuel investment to produce and transport the grain. In contrast, raising animals on grass substantially reduces or eliminates the reliance on these row crops. Grass-based systems maintain cover on the land, also reducing or eliminating erosion and runoff. Lastly, the graziers in this directory rarely use herbicides, insecticides, or commercial fertilizer.

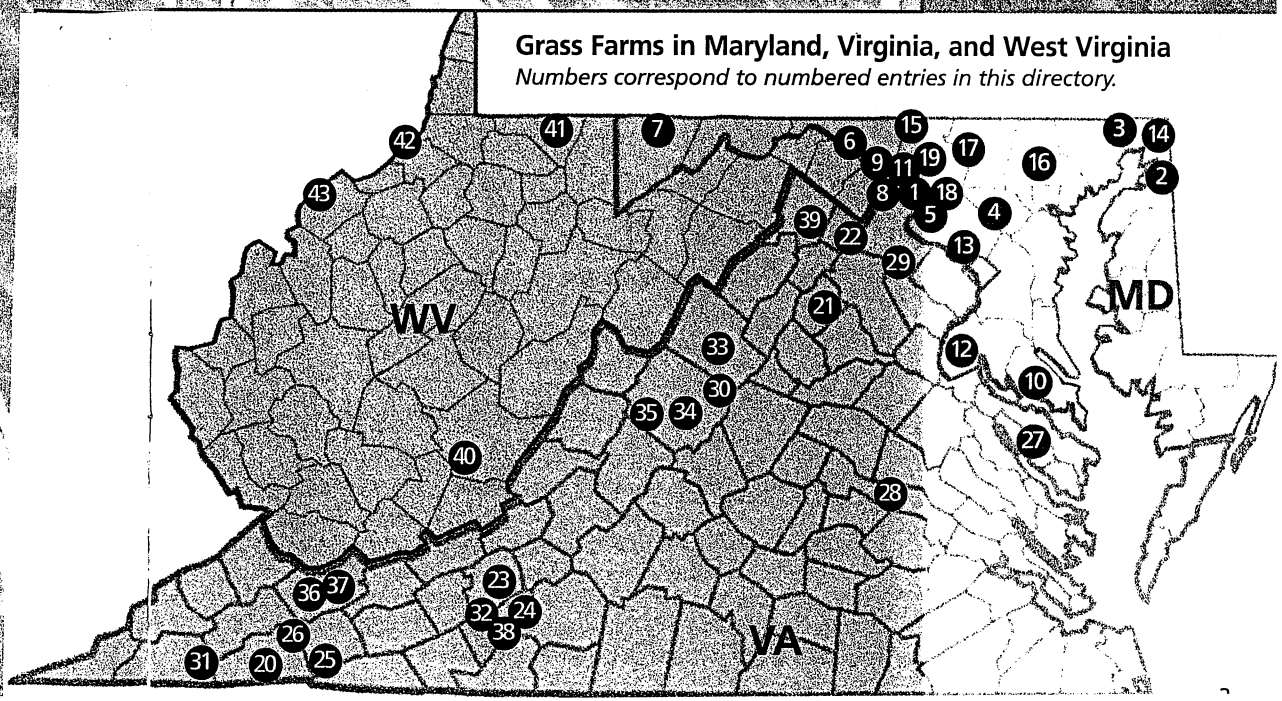
Lucky for consumers in the Chesapeake Bay area, there are over 40 graziers in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia offering their natural or organic products directly to the public. These folks will be happy to discuss their offerings, suggest recipes, and supply cooking tips. We hope you enjoy their delicious products and the satisfaction that comes from supporting these local, family run grass-farms. **Bon Appetit!**

Disclaimer

Inclusion in this directory does not represent an endorsement by Future Harvest-CASA. Future Harvest-CASA supports local, grass-based farms, but we cannot guarantee specific products described in this listing.

Grass Farms in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia

Numbers correspond to numbered entries in this directory.



Local Food Connections
From Farms to Schools

Through direct marketing of their products, Iowa farmers and growers are forming a stronger connection with their customers and obtaining premium prices for those products. One potential direct marketing customer is the local school.

Each year, elementary, junior, and senior high schools purchase large quantities of food for their breakfast and lunch programs. Connecting schools with local growers and producers can benefit both parties. In fact, schools have purchased directly from local farmers in several successful pilot programs around the country. Often these efforts are integrated into the school curriculum through farm visits by students or classroom visits by growers or producers.

Market Size and Opportunity

Nearly every school district has a foodservice program that provides breakfast and lunch to students during the school day. Approximately 20 percent of children attending a school participate in the breakfast program; often 70–90 percent participate in the lunch program. Applying these percentages to your school district's enrollment provides some idea of the potential market of the local school district.

Breakfast typically consists of a serving of milk, a serving of fruit or fruit juice, and either two servings of cereal or grain products (e.g., cereal and toast) or one serving of cereal or grain (e.g., pancake) and one serving of meat (e.g., sausage or egg). The price charged for breakfast averages around $1.

Lunch typically consists of an entrée, two servings of vegetables and/or fruits, one or two servings of bread or grains, dessert, and one serving of milk. The price charged for lunch usually ranges from $1.30 to $1.80, with higher prices often charged for junior and senior high school students because of larger serving portions.

Most school districts participate in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs and are eligible to receive food products through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Distribution Program. This program provides a variety of shelf-stable or frozen commodities (e.g., meat and poultry items, canned fruits and vegetables, flour, shortening) at a greatly reduced cost. School districts typically will purchase available commodities through this program rather than from other sources because of this reduced cost. Fresh food items, such as produce, eggs, and milk, are not included.

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The foodservice director most often is the person who purchases food for the school. Directors usually purchase from less than 10 suppliers. Payment for food is made through the district business office. The Board of Education often has to give approval for payment of any bills, however, school districts usually pay their bills within 30 days.

Most schools receive delivery of food items directly to the school where the foods will be served. Food deliveries usually are accepted only during the mid-morning, after breakfast service ends and before lunch service starts.

Concerns with Purchasing Locally

School foodservice directors will have several concerns when considering whether to purchase locally grown or produced foods. These include:

- cost effectiveness
- seasonality and availability of products
- reliability of volume to meet needs of the district
- product packaging and labeling to meet safety regulations
- efficiency of ordering and payment procedures

Finding ways to minimize these concerns will increase a producer's chance of selling to a local school district.

Cost effectiveness is a concern because school foodservices operate with a limited budget. Talk with your local school foodservice director to determine whether prices of your food products are competitive with the school's current purchasing. Schools may be willing to pay higher prices for local products in order to support local business and obtain fresher or higher quality items.

Seasonality and availability of products may impact your ability to sell to school foodservice operations. Schools typically do not serve meals during the summer months. This may limit both the kind and quantity of products, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables, that you are able to sell to schools. Work with the school foodservice program to encourage use of local products when available. Schools can switch back to their traditional vendors if or when you no longer have product due to seasonality.

Most schools plan their menus more than one month in advance of service. Foods then are purchased to meet the published menu. Producers may find it difficult to know 30 days or more in advance exactly what day food items will be available for sale. Coordinate with the school foodservice director to find ways to build flexibility into published menus to allow for harvest timing.

Reliability of volume can pose greater challenges for direct marketing to larger school districts. Having sufficient volume to meet the needs of the school and having the product ready for harvest when the school is serving that food item are particularly challenging. Meet with the school food service director to determine which products you have in sufficient volume to meet the school's needs. Providing items for the school's salad bar may be a good place to begin as these products often are needed in lower volume than other products served.

Product packaging and labeling are issues that pertain to compliance with government (state and national) regulations for food safety assurance. Children's immune systems are not fully developed so they are more vulnerable to food-borne illnesses. High levels of pathogenic bacteria (such as *Salmonella, camphylobacter jejuni*, and E. Coli O 157 H) and the presence of parasites are concerns for all foods. There are few regulations regarding selling fresh produce items, with a few exceptions such as raw seed sprouts and cut melons. However, it is important to package them in consistent amounts into sturdy containers approved as food contact surfaces. School foodservice buyers prefer to have a set number or weight in each package in order to facilitate purchasing, receiving, and inventory control of the product.

To protect the quality, particularly of fresh produce, sturdy containers with appropriate packing and proper transportation must be used. Plastic bags should be approved for food storage. (Many large plastic bags are treated to reduce garbage odor and as such are not safe for food storage.) A school foodservice director, for example, likely will not buy apples from a grower if it appears the apples are packed in boxes previously used for another product or delivered in the back of a pickup truck not thoroughly cleaned prior to loading.

Efficiency of ordering and payment procedures is another concern. School foodservice directors most often order supplies from a vendor once a week for delivery sometime within the upcoming week. These orders may be placed in person to a company's salesperson or placed through telephone, fax, or electronic transmission. Invoices for food typically are not paid by foodservice department personnel, rather they are processed and paid (usually within 30 days) through the school's business office. Direct marketing to local schools will be facilitated when minimal changes in this ordering and payment routine are needed.

Marketing Strategies

Producers can chose from two marketing strategies: going it alone or working together.

Going It Alone

One way to sell to local school districts is to approach the school district as an individual producer. As with other direct marketing efforts, you can do several things to increase your chances of being successful with such an effort.

1) Do your homework. It is important before meeting with potential buyers to know:

- products you will have for sale.
- how your product will be sold (by the pound, the bunch, individual pieces).
- volume you could provide.
- months of the year the foodservice operation prepares meals.
- months you could provide the products.
- how frequently you could deliver.
- if there is a product guarantee and return policy.
- selling price. (Research wholesale prices and remember that the school district is used to paying the lowest possible price. If you can show buyers benefits of buying from you, they may pay a higher price.)
- school's needs. (Determine before approaching the school how many children are served or how often a salad bar is available. Most school menus are published a month in advance of service. The more you understand and can accommodate the needs of the school, the more likely your chances to be a supplier.)
- benefits of buying from you. These benefits may include supporting a local farmer and/or business (remember that some schools have policies encouraging purchases from local businesses); getting a fresher, higher quality, and/or better tasting product; ability to grow or raise products to meet specific needs of the buyer (for example, carrots of a certain size because the elementary children like them that way); and perhaps having your farm available for class field trips.

2) Have clear and appealing information available for the buyer. This should include a product and price list and, if possible, an appealing brochure or handout describing the farm in a way that emphasizes the benefits of buying directly from you.

3) Call the buyer first and set an appointment. Professionalism and courtesy are key to establishing a good direct marketing relationship. Do not expect to get a response from sending out information through the mail to school districts. Direct marketing is based on developing a relationship of trust that will require in-person meetings. Dropping in on foodservice directors without an appointment is not a good way to establish a new business relationship. The idea of buying from a local farmer may be a new concept to them. Remind them that you live in or near the community. Perhaps your children attend or did attend the school, or perhaps you share some friends, neighbors, or history. These are important factors in building direct marketing relationships. Be prepared to sell or explain the idea on the phone to even get an appointment, and be prepared that a willingness to at least "explore the idea further at another meeting" may be initially the best commitment you can get.

4) Make wise commitments and be responsive to the buyer's needs. Don't commit to provide a product until you are sure you can meet that commitment. If you do not deliver on a commitment without good reason, the buyer or school district may become disinterested and an opportunity will be missed. Also don't commit to a price below your needed profit margin. If the school cannot pay the price needed, look for a different market. After an account is established, stay in touch with the buyer regularly to see how it is working out and if there is anything that needs changing. Being responsive to the buyer's needs is the key to maintaining and growing a direct marketing relationship.

Working Together

Around the country, programs are springing up that link multiple local farms to local schools through some type of organized effort. These programs often come about through the initiative and support of public or non-profit organizations that want to help local farmers develop new markets, improve the nutrition and quality of school lunch programs, and/or incorporate local farms into school curriculum. These programs generally fall into two types:

1) Farmers sell as individual vendors to the school but the link between the farm and the school is developed through a non-profit organization. For example, the Community Food Security Project of Occidental College developed a Farmers' Market Fruit and Salad Bar Program for schools. Through the planning and organizing efforts of this non-profit organization, several school districts in the state have implemented salad bars stocked almost entirely with food purchased directly from farmers at local farmers' markets. Student participation in the school lunch program increased as a result.

2) Technical assistance is provided to a group of growers who want to cooperate in selling their products to local schools. This type of effort has

been successful in Florida where the USDA helped a group of growers form a cooperative that grows, processes, and distributes food to a number of school districts in the area.

There are advantages to a coordinated effort. For example, the public or non-profit organization often meets with school parents, officials, and personnel for a period of time to discuss benefits of supporting local farmers. Secondly, they can provide assistance in sorting out issues such as price, packaging, and delivery. By working together, farmers can develop new markets that would not be possible to serve as a single grower.

Resources

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Getting food on the table: An action guide to local food policy. 1999. Community Food Security Coalition and California Sustainable Working Group. www.foodsecurity.org. Contact Andy Fisher, (310) 822-5410.

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Schofer, D., G. Holmes, V. Richardson, and C. Connerly. 2000. *Innovative marketing opportunities for small farmers: Local schools as customers.* Contact Daniel Schofer, (202) 690-1170.

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Summary of farm-to-school projects around the nation. Community Food Security Coalition School Food Campaign. Available summer 2000. www.foodsecurity.org. Contact Andrea Azuma, (323) 259-2566.

For more information, contact Catherine A. Strohbehn, Department of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, (515) 294-1730, cstrohbe@iastate.edu; or Practical Farmers of Iowa—Field to Family Project, Ames, Iowa, Gary Huber or Robert Karp, (515) 232-5649, ftf@isunet.net.

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This project was supported by an Extension 21 Value-Added Agriculture grant.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.

File: Economics 1-6

Local Food Connections
From Farms to Restaurants

Through direct marketing of their products, Iowa farmers and producers are forming a stronger connection with their customers and obtaining premium prices for those products. One potential direct marketing customer is the local restaurant.

Each year, restaurants purchase large quantities of food for their operations. Connecting restaurant managers and chefs with local growers and producers can benefit both parties.

Market Size and Opportunity

The food service industry is one of the largest industries in the United States. Currently, nearly 50 percent of the food dollar is spent on food eaten away from home. Much of this food is consumed in restaurants. Nationally, the restaurant industry's food and beverage purchases exceed $140 billion each year.

Restaurants are considered a cornerstone in a community's economy. Nearly every community has at least one restaurant and most communities have many. These restaurants typically provide food for at least two meal periods a day. Some provide food from early morning until late evening. Most are open at least six days a week; many are open seven days a week, 365 days per year.

Most restaurant operations have a printed menu of foods to be served. Many offer "chef specials" that change on a daily or weekly basis. The price charged for each menu item typically is calculated based on the cost to the restaurant of the food item being served. A common guideline used in restaurants is that the food cost for a menu item should be 30 percent, or less, of the price charged for that item.

The chef or manager most often is the person who purchases the food for the restaurant. The number of suppliers a given restaurant will use varies greatly. Payment for food is usually by check. Payment may occur at the time of delivery or will be sent.

Restaurant Expectations

Restaurant operators have several expectations when considering whether to purchase locally grown or produced foods. These include:

- seasonality and availability of products
- adequate volume to meet needs of the restaurant
- product packaging and labeling to meet safety regulations
- ease and efficiency of ordering and payment
- competitive price

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Seasonality and availability of products may impact your ability to sell to restuarants. Work with the restaurant manager or chef to encourage use of local products when available. Restaurants can switch back to their traditional vendors if or when you no longer have a product due to seasonality.

Restaurant managers and chefs prefer dependable suppliers. Developing a selling relationship with a restaurant means making contact on a weekly, not periodic basis.

Many restaurants have printed menus that change infrequently. Foods are purchased to meet this printed menu. Producers may find it difficult to know in advance exactly what day food items will be available for sale. Coordinate with the restuarant manager to find ways to build flexibility into published menus to allow for harvest timing.

Many restaurants also will offer daily "chef specials" that might feature locally grown or produced items. Work with the restaurant manager or chef to coordinate featuring your products.

Adequate volume can pose greater challenges for direct marketing to larger restaurants. Having sufficient volume to meet the needs of the restaurant and having the product ready for harvest when the restaurant is serving that food item is particularly challenging. Meet with the restaurant manager or chef to determine which products you have in sufficient volume to meet the restaurant's needs.

You also might consider meeting with the manager or chef prior to planting each year. Knowing products that a restaurant will use might assist with your planning.

Product packaging and labeling are issues that pertain to compliance with government (state and national) regulations for food safety assurance and manager ease in ordering. High levels of pathogenic bacteria (such as *Salmonella, camphylobacter jejuni,* and E. Coli O 157 H) and the presence of parasites are concerns for all foods. There are few regulations regarding selling fresh produce items, however exceptions include items such as raw seed sprouts and cut melons.

Packaging your products in consistent amounts into sturdy containers approved as food contact surfaces is important. Restaurant buyers prefer to have a set number or weight in each package in order to facilitate purchasing, receiving, and inventory control of the product.

To protect the quality, particularly of fresh produce, sturdy containers with appropriate packing and proper transportation must be used. Plastic bags should be approved for food storage. (Many large plastic bags are treated to reduce garbage odor and as a results are not safe for food storage.)

Restaurant managers and chefs may expect growers to follow good agricultural practices and/or may require growers to have commercial liability insurance.

A restaurant manager, for example, likely will not buy salad greens from a grower if it appears the greens are packed in boxes previously used for another product or delivered in the back of a pickup truck not thoroughly cleaned prior to loading.

Ease and efficiency of ordering and payment is another concern. Restaurant managers most often order supplies from a vendor once a week for delivery within the upcoming week. These orders may be placed in person to a company's salesperson or placed through telephone, fax, or electronic transmission. Invoices for food may be paid upon delivery or sent (usually within 30 days) through the mail. Discuss payment procedures during the initial visit to the restaurant.

Marketing Strategies

Producers can chose from two marketing strategies: going it alone or working together with other producers.

Going It Alone

One way to sell to local restaurants is to approach the restaurant as an individual producer. As with other direct marketing efforts, you can do several things to increase your chances of being successful with such an effort.

Do your homework. It is important before meeting with potential buyers to know:

- products you will have for sale
- how your product will be sold (by the pound, the bunch, individual pieces)
- volume you could provide
- months you could provide the products
- how frequently you could deliver

- if there is a product guarantee and return policy
- selling price (Research wholesale prices so you know what the restaurant currently is paying for a similar product.)
- restaurant's needs (Determine, before approaching the restaurant, what items are being served on their menu. The more you understand and can accommodate the needs of the restaurant, the more likely your chances to be a supplier.)
- benefits of buying from you (These benefits may include supporting a local farmer and/or business; getting a fresher, higher quality, and/or better tasting product; ability to grow or raise products to meet specific needs of the buyer. For example, vegetables of a certain size because the chef prefers them that way.)

Have clear and appealing information available for the buyer. This should include a product and price list and, if possible, an appealing brochure or handout describing the farm in a way that emphasizes the benefits of buying directly from you.

Call the buyer first and set an appointment. Professionalism and courtesy are key to establishing a good direct marketing relationship. Do not expect a response from sending information through the mail to restaurants. Direct marketing is based on developing a relationship of trust that will require in-person meetings. Dropping in on restuarant managers without an appointment is not a good way to establish a new business relationship. Avoiding busy meal times will result in a more productive meeting.

The idea of buying from a local farmer may be a new concept to a restaurant manager. Remind them that you live in or near the community. Perhaps you eat at their restaurant, or perhaps you share some friends, neighbors, or history. These are important factors in building direct marketing relationships. Be prepared to sell or explain the idea on the phone in order to get an appointment, and a willingness to at least "explore the idea further at another meeting" may be initially the best commitment you can get.

Make wise commitments and be responsive to the buyer's needs. Don't commit to provide a product until you are sure you can meet that commitment. If you do not deliver on a commitment without good reason, the buyer may become disinterested and an opportunity to sell will be missed. Also, don't commit to a price below your needed profit margin. If the restaurant cannot pay the price needed, look for a different market. After an account is established, stay in touch regularly with the buyer to see how it is working out and if there is anything that needs to be changed. Being responsive to the buyer's needs is the key to maintaining and growing a direct marketing relationship.

Working Together

Around the country, programs are being formed to link multiple local growers/producers to local foodservice operations. These programs often are organized through the initiative and support of public or not-for-profit organizations that want to help local growers/producers develop new markets. There are several strategies to consider:

Local grower/producers sell as individual vendors to the restaurant, but the link between the farm and the restaurant is developed through a not-for-profit organization. For example, the Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) has served as an intermediary between growers/producers and local restaurant managers in central Iowa. The PFI group has sponsored workshops to facilitate discussion among growers/producers and restaurant food buyers, developed materials identifying names and products of local growers/producers, and served as a broker to link local growers/producers and restaurant food buyers.

Growers/producers organize a cooperative alliance to market and sell their products. Initiating a cooperative effort among several local growers/producers can reduce some of the obstacles to selling to local restaurants. Combining efforts often allows the restaurant food buyer to make one call to order local food products and can help ensure that sufficient quantities will be available to meet the restaurant's needs. Such cooperation also allows for one payment to the cooperative by the restaurant rather than multiple payments to individual growers/producers.

There are advantages to a coordinated effort. For example, joint marketing will minimize time spent by each grower/producer while maximizing the number of contacts made. Second, joint efforts can provide assistance in sorting out issues such as price, packaging, and delivery.

By working together, farmers can develop new markets that would not be possible to serve as a single grower.

Resources

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2002 Iowa Farmers' Market Directory. Available at:www.agriculture.state.ia.us/Farmersmarket.htm.

2002 Iowa Fruits and Vegetables Growers Directory. Available at: www.agriculture.state.ia.us/Fruit&VegDirectory.htm

2002 Family Farms Meats Directory. Available at: www.agriculture.state.ia.us/meatdirectory1.htm

World Wide Web Resources

Community Food Security Coalition
http://www.foodsecurity.org

FDA Food Code
http://www.foodsafety.gov/%7Edms/foodcode.html

Food Routes Resource Center
http://www.foodroutes.org

Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management Extension
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pages/families/hrim

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/leopold/

North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association
http://www.nafdma.com

North Central Initiative for Small Farm Profitability
http://www.farmprofitability.org/

Practical Farmers of Iowa
http://www.pfi.iastate.edu

Taste of Iowa
http://www.atasteofiowa.org

For more information, contact Catherine A. Strohbehn, Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management program, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, (515) 294-7474, cstrohbe@iastate.edu; or Practical Farmers of Iowa—Field to Family Project, Ames, Iowa, Gary Huber or Robert Karp, (515) 232-5649, ftf@isunet.net.

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Artwork by Lonna Nachtigal.

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This publication is supported by a grant from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agricutlture.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.

File: Economics 1-6

Local Food Connections
Food Service Considerations

Many success stories are told of restaurants and food service operations in schools, hospitals, and universities serving locally grown or processed foods to their patrons. Chefs and consumers say they prefer locally grown and processed fresh foods and want to help farmers in their region. This publication explains how a food service operation can start purchasing local foods.

The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that about half of each food dollar spent in this country is for food prepared outside the home. That means large quantities of food are purchased by operations that prepare meals for American consumers. Although large national food companies have typically served these food service operations, local farmers and processors can be considered potential suppliers. Development of this market benefits local farmers, particularly those small to medium in size.

Food service operators have many responsibilities; food purchasing is only one aspect of their job. Many food service operators are in favor of purchasing from local sources as this helps family farms, keeps food dollars in the regional economy, and supports other local businesses. Yet, this desire is challenged by the reality of day-to-day operations.

Food service buyers interested in buying from local producers and processors should consider the benefits and obstacles to determine if this concept will work for their operations. If food buyers do chose to work with local vendors, buyers and vendors need to communicate clearly and often to make these purchasing arrangements successful.

A recent mail survey of health care, school, and restaurant food service managers in Iowa identified the benefits and obstacles of purchasing from local sources.

What Are the Benefits?

Food service buyers see the availability of a fresher (and often higher quality) food product and support of local farmers as the strongest benefits of purchasing from local sources. Good public relations, ability to purchase small quantities, lower transportation costs, special produce varieties, a known product source, and safer food were mentioned as additional benefits of local food purchasing.

What Are the Obstacles?

Not surprisingly in Iowa, year round availability was identified as the biggest obstacle by most food service buyers. Other obstacles included: the need to work with multiple vendors; obtaining adequate supply; consistent package size; reliable food quality; order, delivery and payment methods; and product cost.

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Awareness of local and state regulations concerning approved food sources for various types of food items, labor time to prepare food, and food safety issues also were mentioned as preceived obstacles to purchasing from local sources.

What does this mean for me?

Findings from this study and conversations with food service operators indicate there is interest in purchasing from local sources. However, it is important to find ways to minimize or eliminate the obstacles of dealing with multiple producers/processors (often necessary to obtain adequate supply) for ordering, delivery, and payment processes are important.

Good communication between buyer and seller is needed to identify product availability, product size and quality, and package information.

Marketing efforts to promote use of local foods at points of sale help create an awareness of the source of foods served and may create a demand for regional foods.

How Do I Get Started?

Identify sources. Food service operators interested in purchasing from local food producers and processors may find information about local growers/producers in their area in directories published by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. Interested food service operators could ask patrons and area farmers about any cooperatives of food producers that have been formed in the area.

Some independently-owned restaurants have contracted with area farmers to grow their operations' supply of fresh produce items such as carrots, potatoes, garlic, etc.

Local farmers' markets or community supported agriculture (CSA) programs may be another source of locally grown items. A nationwide directory of farmers' markets and CSAs is available at www.foodroutes.org.

The *Taste of Iowa* program promotes foods where 50 percent of the value has been added in the state.

Know the regulations. Most states use *Food Code*, published by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, as the source of regulations for food service establishments. The *Food Code* requires that food be purchased from approved suppliers. Your local health inspector can help determine whether a supplier would be considered an approved source.

The term "approved suppliers" does not mean a food service operation can buy only from national vendors. Food service buyers can purchase a variety of items from local producers to serve their operations. Buyers might want to visit the grower's/producer's operation to review food safety practices.

Generally, potentially hazardous foods such as meat, dairy products, fresh shell eggs, and certain produce items must come from licensed or inspected food processing plants. Meats must be processed in a state-inspected facility if sold to food service operations in the same state. If meats are sold across state lines, then the processing facility must be federally inspected.

Dairy products used in food service establishments must be pasteurized. Fresh shell eggs can come from local farmers if the farmer is licensed with the state to ensure breeding and collection facilities are clean.

Fresh produce suppliers generally have no regulations or licensing requirements since most fresh produce items are not considered potentially hazardous. One exception is alfalfa sprouts. These should only be purchased from a licensed vendor. Any processing of fresh produce items by local growers, such as chopping lettuce or slicing radishes, must take place in a licensed food processing facility or in an inspected kitchen.

The buyer should be aware of potential risks to the safety and quality of the fresh produce as it is packaged and transported. Buyers should check that packaging is done correctly to protect the integrity of the produce and ensure the food is not contaminated. For example, large plastic garbage bags may seem to be a convenient package for bulk produce, such as spring salad mix. But the interior of these bags is often treated with chemicals to reduce odors which could contaminate the bags' contents.

Other than protection of the food integrity, there are no package regulations.

Some non-potentially hazardous food sales are also restricted. Fresh bread, pies, or desserts can be prepared in private homes and

sold directly to consumers at farmers' markets, but they cannot be sold to food service establishments unless they have been prepared in an inspected kitchen.

Communicate your operation's needs. Operation procedures your establishment uses for ordering, receiving, and paying for products from local producers must be developed. You should clearly state (verbally and in writing) operational needs such as estimated amounts used per week, desired quality (description of characteristics or grade equivalent), package size and materials, and other product information.

Food producers may have little understanding of how a food service operation will use a product. It is important to clearly communicate this essential information. For example, when radishes are purchased from a national vendor the green tops will have been removed. A local grower most likely will not remove the tops. Thus, the operation may be required to spend on-site labor time to prepare the product for service.

Food service operators should identify times when food can be received and what type of payment process is used. Multi-unit or institutional operations frequently need board or central office approval of payments for goods delivered.

To streamline operations, food service operators often use a limited number of national vendors. Local producers or processors who form a cooperative increase efficiency for themselves and the food service operator. Food service operators should consider requesting a weekly local list from local growers and producers that includes such information as products available, size of food items, quality, estimated quantity available, and estimated price per purchase unit. If food growers know they can count on your business, there may be a willingness to negotiate price.

Market to your patrons. The Downtown Farmers' Market in Ames, Iowa asks the question, "Do you know where your food comes from?" The increase in the number of farmers' markets demonstrates consumers are interested in farm fresh foods, environmental concerns, and perhaps, a sense of security in knowing the product source.

Food service operations can ask suppliers for permission to use farm names or logos on table tents or develop other point of sale signage to communicate to patrons the source of the food item. This is a good public relations strategy for a food service operation.

Consumers have indicated a willingness to pay more for local foods. If purchasing locally grown or produced food items costs more, consumers likely will accept paying more for these menu items.

Resources

Azuma, A.M. & Fisher, A. (2001). *Healthy farms, healthy kids: Evaluating the barriers and opportunities for farm to school programs.* Community Food Security Coalition, P.O. Box 209, Venice, CA, 90294 or www.foodsecurity.org

Custom veggies gain ground with small farmers who sell to chefs. (1998, March 12) *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A1.

Gregoire, M.B. & Strohbehn C. (2002). Benefits and obstacles to purchasing from local growers/ producers. *Journal of Child Nutrition and Management* Available at: www.asfsa.org childnutrition/JCNM.

Hamilton, N. (1999). *The legal guide for direct farm marketing.* Drake University Agricultural Law Center. Call (515) 271-2065 for ordering information.

Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska -- Lincoln, Food Processing Center. (2001). *Attracting consumers with locally grown products.* Available at: www.foodmap.unl.edu

Johnson, D.B. & Stevenson, G.W. (1998). *Something to cheer about: National trends and prospects for sustainable agricultural products in food service operations.* Available at: www.foodroutes.org

Marketing on the edge, (2002). Available at: www.nafdma.com

Pirog, R., Van Pelt, T., Enshanyan, K., & Cooke, E. (2001). *Food, fuel, and freeways: An Iowa perspective on how far food travels, final usage, and greenhouse gas emission.* Available at: www.ag.iastate.edu/ centers/leopold

Pirog, R. (2001). *Institutional food markets: The Iowa experience.* Available at: www.ag.iastate.edu/ centers/leopold

Practical Farmers of Iowa. (2002). *Expanding local food systems by marketing to Iowa institutions.* Available at: www.pfi.iastate.edu

Prewitt, M. (2000, December 11). New pet project: Chefs buy into politically correct food choices. *Nation's Restaurant News*, 1.

Strohbehn, C. & Gregoire, M.B. (2001). Innovations in school food purchasing: Connecting local food. *Journal of Child Nutrition and Management, 25(2)*, 62-65. Available at: www.asfsa.org/childnutrition/JCNM

Selling local food to restaurants and food services: Why and how. (2002). Available at: www.food routes.org

2002 Iowa Farmers' Market Directory. Available at: www.agriculture.state.ia.us/Farmersmarket.htm.

2002 Iowa Fruits and Vegetables Growers Directory. Available at: www.agriculture.state.ia.us/Fruit&VegDirectory.htm

2002 Family Farms Meats Directory. Available at: www.agriculture.state.ia.us/meatdirectory1.htm

World Wide Web Resources

Community Food Security Coalition
http://www.foodsecurity.org

FDA Food Code
http://www.foodsafety.gov/%7Edms/foodcode.html

Food Routes Resource Center
http://www.foodroutes.org

Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management Extension
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pages/families/hrim

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/leopold/

North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association
http://www.nafdma.com

North Central Initiative for Small Farm Profitability
http://www.farmprofitability.org/

Practical Farmers of Iowa
http://www.pfi.iastate.edu

Taste of Iowa
http://www.atasteofiowa.org

University of Wisconsin Center for Integrated Agriculure Systems
http://www.wisc.edu/cias

For more information about purchasing local food for a food service operation, contact Catherine A. Strohbehn or Mary Gregoire, Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management program, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, (515) 294-7474, cstrohbe@iastate.edu

Prepared by Catherine A. Strohbehn and Mary Gregoire, Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management program, Iowa State University.

Artwork by Lonna Nachtigal.

LEOPOLD CENTER

This publication is supported by a grant from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agricutlture.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.

File: Economics 1-6

F. Organiztions

F. ORGANIZATIONS

F. Organizations

Check with you local Resource Conservation and Development Council and the Extension Educator for local or state organizations.

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA)
NAFDMA is a network group that, among other activities, organizes annual conferences, publishes a quarterly newsletter and organizes tours.
Website: www.nafdma.com
Ph: 1-888-884-9270

Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Association
Web site: www.madmc.com

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Inc.
PO Box 880
Cobleskill, NY 12043
Ph: 518-827-8495
http://ny.nofa.org

Pennsylvania Retail Farm Market Association
The Pennsylvania Retail Farm Market Association provides videos and written material that are used regularly in farm market skills development efforts. Financial arrangements can be made for their use or rental. Their website helps consumers find Farm Markets, provides direct communication to the association for members, and aids the search for products and services.
Website: http://www.pafarm.com/
1000 Thorndale Rd.
West Chester, PA 19380
Ph: (610) 269-3494 or (610) 391-9840
Email: market@pafarm.com

G. Website Marketing

G. WEBSITE MARKETING

G. Website Marketing

More information about web sites is available in Chapter XVIX.

Agri-Marketing
This website is an information resource on marketing for agricultural products.
http://ag.udel.edu/maccap/agri_marketing/index.htm

AgriMarketing.com
This website contains the online version of AgriMarketing Magazine. The magazine provides agribusiness news and discussion, all available on the website. The website also contains contact lists and advertising information.
http://www.agrimarketing.com/whoweare.php3
For hardcopies of the magazine, contact:
Judy Knoll
Ph: (314) 372-3524

Using the Internet as a Farm Marketing Tool
By William J. Bamka
Available at: http://www.joe.org/joe/2000april/tt1.html

Your B&B Website Is Not Being Seen pg. 12-14
By Scott & Allison Crumpton
Bed and Breakfast Journal June 2002

Direct Your Web Site to a Directory
By Brian Chmielewski
This publication identifies the differences between search engines and directories and discusses how to get your website listed in a good directory.
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/website.txt

E-Mail-The Most Important On-Line Communication Tool in Your Marketing Toolbox
By Terry Williams
This publication discusses how to write clear and concise emails that convey a positive image of your business to your customers.
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/e-mail.txt

Successful Internet Marketing Requires Follow-Up Marketing
By Jeffrey Spencer
Available online at: www.bizoffice.com/library/files/followup.txt

BedandBreakfast.com
This website provides information on over 27,000 bed and breakfast inns worldwide, contains a search engine, a listing of inns that are for sale and a newsletter.
http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/

Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program Website
This website is designed to be a library of marketing information that should enable Northeastern producers to make informed decisions to improve the success of their enterprises.
Available at: http://www.sheepgoatmarketing.org/sgm/index.html

Sheep, Goat and Deer Marketing Website
http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/extension/srmarketing/marketingdir/index.htm

www.joe.org

Journal of Extension

April 2000
Volume 38 Number 2

Using the Internet as a Farm-Marketing Tool

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Background

New Jersey farmers are continuously challenged to produce commodities while maintaining productive open space in the most densely populated state in the nation. The state is a mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities, with a total population of 8.1 million people. Approximately 18% of the total land area is farmland, 50% of which is in field and forage crop production (USDA, 1999). However, field and forage crops net a lower dollar per acre return than most crops in New Jersey. Low profit margins combined with high land and production costs greatly affect the present and future viability of the industry. In order to remain in operation, field and forage crop producers must be proficient in both crop production and business management.

New Jersey has over 120,000 acres of farmland dedicated to hay production with a market value in excess of 33 million dollars (New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service, 1998). A substantial portion of the hay and straw produced is used to support small livestock producers and the equine population. The state currently estimates a horse population in excess of 49,000, of which approximately 35% are classified as pleasure horses (NJASS, 1996).

The small livestock producers and pleasure horse owners provide a steady hay and straw market for many producers. Producers are continually seeking to more fully develop the market potential for their hay and straw crops. However, the sale of hay and straw often represents the only form of direct retail sales practiced by many field and forage crop producers. The sale of hay and straw is most often by referral. As a result, many of these producers do not have significant experience in market promotion and development.

Use of the Internet

The use of the Internet continues to expand. It has been reported that Internet usage doubles every 100 days, with an estimated 62 million Americans now using the Internet (Bridis, 1998). New Jersey is estimated to have over 1.5 million Internet users. According to a July 1999 report from the USDA Economics and Statistics System, New Jersey has the highest farm Internet access rate, with 53% of farms reporting Internet access.

The Internet has provided a means of delivering a vast array of information for education, research, entertainment, and business. The medium also offers a means by which farm producers can relay information about their agricultural operation to the non-agricultural community.

Programming Efforts

Given the farm-marketing needs of producers and the potential of the Internet to help meet those needs, an Internet database of hay and straw producers was developed. Also, classes on the use of the Internet and Web page design were conducted for agricultural producers.

A survey was sent to hay and straw producers requesting information about the types and seasonal availability of hay and straw products produced. From the responses, an informational brochure and World Wide Web Page were developed. The brochure has been distributed to numerous individuals, and the Web site has been accessed several hundred times. The Web site has also been linked to drought-related Web pages in the region as a resource for locating forage. Producers listed on the Web page have reported being contacted and selling hay and straw to out-of-state buyers. The directory has proven to be so successful that producers in surrounding counties requested that it be expanded to a regional directory. In response, the directory was recently updated to include the southern region of the state.

To further provide information about the potential benefits and applications of the Internet to agriculture, a 3-hour class was developed for producers to discuss Web sites, search engines, and the development of Web pages. The objective of the class is to inform producers of the informational resources and potential marketing benefits of the Internet. The class is taught using a desktop computer, LCD projector, and PowerPoint slide presentations.

The class is designed to be informal, with live Internet demonstrations. In order to incorporate the use of live demonstrations, it is necessary to schedule the class during the

day. This avoids connection problems and the "Net Congestion" that can be encountered during the evening hours. The class provides a basic introduction to computers and Internet service providers. Program participants are provided with an overview of search engines and ways to effectively conduct a search on the Internet. Live demonstrations are conducted featuring specific Web sites, and searches are conducted using audience-provided topics. The remainder of the class is focused on developing a Web page and discussing the potential uses of the Web for farm marketing. A Web page is constructed using commercially available Web-page-development software.

The class has been presented several times. Follow-up evaluations have indicated that the class was very useful to participants. Many reported feeling more comfortable with the use of computers and the Internet following the class.

Conclusion

The Internet has become an informational resource for many individuals. The growth rate of Internet use continues at a phenomenal pace. The presence of World Wide Web addresses on product labels, advertisements, and stationary provides evidence that many businesses have recognized the value of the internet as an informational resource and marketing tool. Therefore, it is important that Extension professionals teach agricultural producers to become familiar with this resource and take advantage of its use in market development and promotion.

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New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service. (1996). 1996 equine survey. New Jersey Department of Agriculture: Trenton, NJ.

New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service. (1998). Annual Report Agricultural Statistics. New Jersey Department of Agriculture: Trenton, NJ.

USDA, Economic Research Service. (1999). NJ Fact Sheet [Online]. Available: http://www.econ.ag.gov/epubs/other/usfact/NJ.htm

USDA, Economics and Statistics System. (1999). Farm computer usage and ownership report [Online]. Available: http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu

This article is online at *http://joe.org/joe/2000april/tt1.html*.

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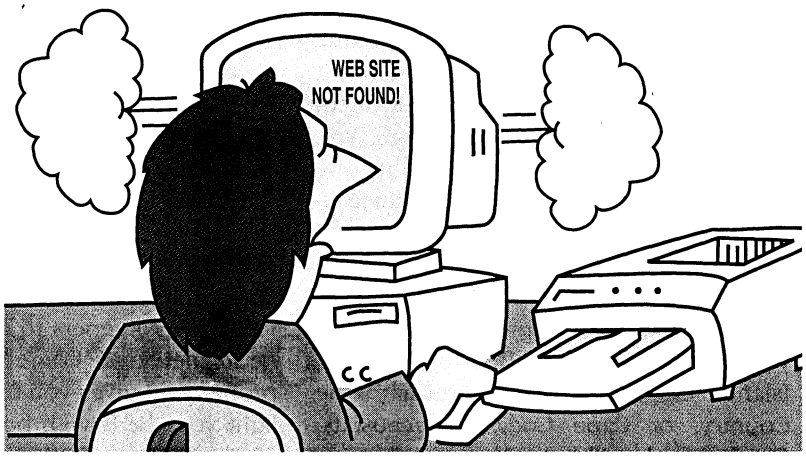
Your B&B Web Site Is Not Being Seen



By Scott & Allison Crumpton

Have you ever seen e-mail with the subject line "Your B&B Web Site Is Not Being Seen?" Most innkeepers have. For years, we have told innkeepers to ignore and throw away such e-mail messages due to the fact that they were delivered by sleazy search engine optimization companies who promised results and rarely, if ever, delivered anything. Often, they promise to submit your web site to thousands of search engines and preyed on the fear that most innkeepers feel daily – that their web site truly isn't being found. Unfortunately, it's quite possible they are now correct – your web site isn't being found.

Before you panic and pull out your billfold to pay one of these unscrupulous marketers $199 to do nothing for you, take the quiz below to see if you're doing all you can to ensure your web site is being found.

Quiz

1. Your web site is listed on Yahoo! (Check by going to Yahoo! and inputting your web address in the search box.)

2. Your web site is found on the first page of Google using a search phrase such as "your city, your state, and bed and breakfast."

3. You are paying for placement using [illegible]ture – formerly Goto.com and your [illegible]s are highly placed.

4. You are signed up for BedandBreakfast.com, BBonline.com, and TheInnkeeper.com with a link back to your web site.

5. You have at least 3 links from local lodging web sites such as your chamber, a local bed and breakfast association or other such web site.

6. You list your web site on your answering machine or voicemail.

7. You are paying for pay per click with Google.

8. You have paid to be on Inktomi. You are paying for the Looksmart pay per click.

9. Your web site was designed by a professional web designer within the last 2 years.

[illegible] yourself 1 point for each true answer.

Take The Next Quiz And Answer True Or False.

1. Proper metatags are vital in the search engines.

2. Alt tags are very important.

3. Link popularity is critical.

4. Resubmission to the search engines on a monthly basis is necessary.

5. Using hidden keywords on your homepage is a sneaky way to get to the top of the search engines.

6. The more pages your site has, the better it will perform in the search engines.

7. Relevancy is secondary to link popularity in determining your position in the [illegible] engines.

8. There are 9 major search engines you need to be submitting your site to.

9. You don't need your own domain name – a page on a popular lodging guide will suffice.

10. Small photos with lots of text to ensure a speedy download time are crucial.

Subtract 1 point for each true answer.

How You Rank:

Marketing Guru:
If your score is a perfect 10, call us – we want to hire you!

Savvy Marketer:
If your score is 8-9 – consider yourself very savvy! Why are you reading this anyway? You should be taking care of all those guests.

A Little Misguided:
If your score is 5-7 – you are doing pretty well, now let's figure out what you are missing and make some improvements.

Swing And A Miss:
If your score if 2-4 – Maybe a little practice will help.

Zero The Hero:
If your score is 0-1 – You are probably a great cook!

There is a simple recipe for success in Internet marketing. First, have a professional web site design with beautiful, large photos of your inn and rooms that will appeal to potential guests. Second, your web site should be found everywhere the potential guest will look on the Internet. To achieve these two basic goals, you should hire the best web designer you can find. Then, you must choose to either become an Internet marketing guru yourself (at the expense of taking care of your guests) or hire one. In

Continued on next page...

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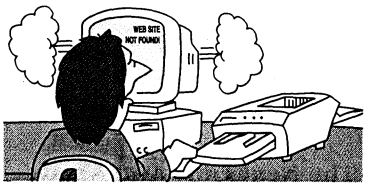
ious articles, the elements of design been discussed. This article will focus on the current, successful search engine practices.

Search Engines

Search engines are changing rapidly. As companies scramble to find ways to become profitable, the days of free search engine submission and trying to sneak to the top are over. Anyone who ignores the acceptable practices of pay-for-performance and relies on the old methods of metatags, hidden keywords, free submissions, and link popularity will be quickly out performed by the competition. Amazingly, many innkeepers reject the new profit model in which the search engines are based upon, preferring to ignore the reality and hoping the trend will simply go away. This is peculiar considering some innkeepers pay the yellow page directory a monthly fee and yet somehow insists the search engines remain free. The following major search engines give preference to paid listings: Overture, Google, Yahoo, MSN, Looksmart, Altavista, Lycos, Hotbot, AOL, and Netscape. Of these, it is vital to be listed in Google, Yahoo, Overture, Looksmart, and MSN. To be at the top of these search engines requires separate paid accounts with Overture, Google and Looksmart. Each of these companies provides listings to the others.

Nearly everyday, we hear an innkeeper say "business is down" and blame is placed squarely on the recession or travel industry slumps due to the events of 9/11. The fact of the matter, however, is that many inns are experiencing record numbers this year as they have taken advantage of the new profit models that the search engines have wholeheartedly embraced.



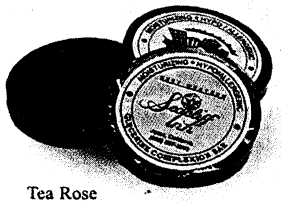
Fullers' Soaps

PRIVATE LABEL AMENITIES

6 Pamaron Way Novato, CA 94949
800-448-9888 Fax; 415-883-8884

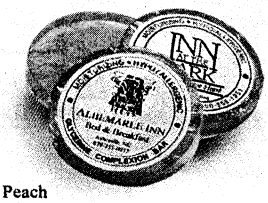
1 oz. Luxor Bottle

1 oz. Classic Bottle



Tea Rose

Jasmine



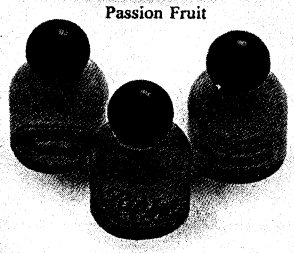
Peach

Mountain Rain

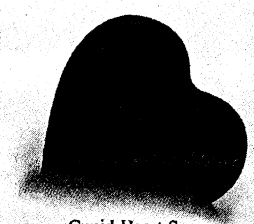
Passion Fruit

Cucumber

Cupid Heart Soap



1 1/3 oz. Clear Bell Bottle



Cupid Heart Soap

THE INNKEEPERS CHOICE

www.fullersoaps.com info@fullersoaps.com

Scott and Allison Crumpton own and operate Moriah Mountain Publishing since 1994 - the oldest provider of complete Internet marketing web solutions for Bed and Breakfast Inns. They service over 550 clients throughout the U.S. through design, hosting and promotion of their web sites. Their complete services can be found at http://www.moriah.com. Their publication, The Bed and Breakfast Explorer - since 1994 - covers Oregon, Washington, California and Idaho. They have both a print guide and online guide at www.bbexplorer.com or call their office at (800) 841-5448 for a copy.

H. Agritourism and Tourism

H. AGRITOURISM AND TOURISM

H. Agritourism and Tourism

Great Country Farms: An Agritourism and Direct Marketing Farmer
This is an example of how farmers (Kate and Mark Zurschmeide) market their experience on the farm. They are direct marketers, CSA, agrieducation, parties, weddings, and special events beyond the production season. Some website information is included in the resource manual.
www.greatcountryfarms.com
Ph: 540-554-2073
Email: farmer@greatcountryfarms.com

Tailwinds Farm
This is an example of how Ted and JoAnn Dawson diversified their interest in horses. To keep up to date on the changes and additions to their "Bed and Bale" enterprises, it is necessary to visit the website. The brochure information is included in the resource manual.
www.fairwindsstables.com
Ph: 410-658-8187

Creating Travel Brochure that Sells
By Tom Quinn
Michigan State University (1982)
E1605
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33729800.html

Tourism Brochures to Boost Business
By Don Breneman, Barbara Koth, and Glenn Kreag
Minnesota Office of Tourism (1987)
ID: CD-FO-3273
This publication discusses how to create an effective brochure that attracts customers.
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33720096.html

Festivals.com
This website provides information on festivals across the United States. It includes festival news and announcement of events. The website also contains an advanced search engine, and a cultural tourism bookstore.
http://www.festivals.com/

Developing an Effective Tourism Marketing Program
Prepared by Cheryl Dimitroff, Robert O. Coppedge, Ron Cox, and Priscilla Bloomquist
U S West Community and Rural Economic Development Partnership
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33700083.html

Tourism Marketing
By Edward Mahoney and Gary Warnell

Michigan State University (1987)
ID: E1959
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33700082.html

Community Travel and Tourism Marketing
By Barbara Koth and Glenn Kreag
University of Minnesota
ID: CD-FO-3272
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33520052.html

Marketing the Uniqueness of Small Towns
Western Rural Development Center
Oregon State University
WREP 57
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33529767.html

Marketing Community Parks and Recreation Resources: Developing Exhibits
By Gary A. Ackert, and Maureen H. McDonough
Michigan State University (1986)
E1932 33.73
This publication describes how to develop an exhibition to market community parks and recreation resources.
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33739803.html

Oregon Agri-Tourism Industry: Marketing Plan
Prepared for: Oregon Tourism Commission and Oregon Department of Agriculture
June 1997
Prepared by Jan Woodruff
Market Advantage
(503) 690-6615

Oregon Agri-Tourism Industry: Marketing Analysis
Prepared for: Oregon Tourism Commission and Oregon Department of Agriculture
June 1997
Prepared by Jan Woodruff
Market Advantage
(503) 690-6615

Marketing Your Farm or Ranch
By S.E. Cotton
Colorado State University Cooperative Extension (updated 2001)
No. 3.763
Available online at:
http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/PUBS/FARMMGT/03763.pdf or
http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/farmmgt/03763.html

Farms, Gardens & Countryside Trails of Western North Carolina
By Jan J. Love
Published by HandMade in America, Inc.
This is a tourism guidebook to the back roads, scenic byways, farms, gardens, orchards, etc of Western North Carolina. See Chapter V for table of contents.
Copies may be obtained by calling:
HandMade in America at 1-800-331-4154

Attracting the Migratory Retiree
By Thomas J. Chestnutt
Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University (1992)
ID: Circular CRD-56
This publication provides information on how to attract the migratory retiree and includes success stories.
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33809807.html

Tourism Advertising: Some Basics
By Barbara Koth
Minnesota Office of Tourism (1987)
ID: CD-FO-3311
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33710087.html

Evaluating Tourism Advertising with Cost-Comparison
By Barbara Koth
University of Minnesota (1988)
ID: CD-FO-3372
Available online at: http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33710083.html

Direct Farm Marketing and Tourism Handbook
Available online at: http://ag.arizona.edu/arec/pubs/dmkt/dmkt.html
Available from: Russ Tronstad, Extension Economist
Ph: (520) 621-2425
Email: tronstad@ag.arizona.edu

Direct Marketing of Ag Products to Tourists
By Dennis B. Propst, Patricia S. Newmyer, and Thomas E. Combrink
Michigan State University (1986)
Extension Bulletin 1960
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33839811.html

Marketing Crafts and Tourist Products
North Central Regional Publication #445
Available online at: http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/pubs/SFNews/archive/93092.htm
Hardcopies available by calling, (402) 472-3023

Marketing Crafts and Other Products to Tourists
By Sherri Gahring, Shirley Niemeyer, Rae Reilly, and JaneAnn Stout
North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (1992)
ID: NCR445
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33809809.html

Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism
A one-page that summarizes some of SARE's agritourism marketing information.
Available in Resource Manual and
www.sare.org.org/market99/entertain.htm

Pricing Tourism Products and Services
By Donald Holecek
Michigan State University (1987)
Available online at: www.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33740097.html

Panhandle Tourism Marketing Council
This is a great example of how several communities in a region formed a partnership to market nature-based tourism. This approach and partnership can work for food, and other products farm products and services. Visit the website to better understand how the council functions and operates.
www.texasptmc.org

E-mail us at Great Country Farms
farmer@greatcountryfarms.com

Our Mission

The Goal of Great Country Farms is to offer a way for everyone to experience farm life and enjoy the benefits of its bounty.

Great Country Farms is a 200 acre working farm situated at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains outside the village of Bluemont, VA. Great Country Farms offers produce as well as the farm experience to its customers. The farm itself is the main attraction with sprawling fields, fishing ponds, a picnic area, friendly animals in our farm animal barnyard, open skies and plenty of old-fashioned hospitality.

Great Country Farms was started by the Zurschmeide family in 1994. Although the Zurschmeide's have been farming in Loudoun County for over 25 years, Great Country Farms is their long sought site to both set up a farm and to expand into new farm ventures such as Community Supported Agriculture, Christmas Trees growing and Group Picnics.

In 1996, the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce voted Great Country Farms, "Agribusiness of the Year" for it's unique efforts to farm in a difficult climate through innovation, rather than developing. Through it's Community Supported Agriculture program, Great Country Farms provides fresh local produce throughout Loudoun County and most of Fairfax County.

Open Daily, April 5th- October 31 from 9am to 5pm.
Admission: April 5th- September 15 is $2.50/person or $10.00/car
Sept 16th- October 31 Weekdays $2.50/person or $10.00/carload
Saturdays/Sundays: $5.00/person or $20.00/carload

ABOUT US
CSA
EVENTS
TOURS
WEDDINGS
PARTIES
U-PICK
MEMBERS
LINKS
HOME

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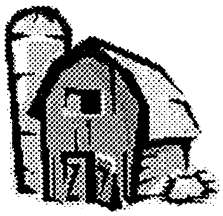
Special Events

Fall Harvest | Special Events | Strawberry Jubilee

Members' Day & Farm Events



At Great Country Farms, a membership includes more than great produce. CSA members have free access to the farm, petting park and fish pond each weekend during the season. Entry to special events including Fall Harvest and Spring Farm Tour are free to members. Our annual Members' Day is becoming famous for great food and fun including hayrides, pony rides and lots of home cooking. This and more is part of your annual membership.

2003 Calendar of Events

(click links to see descriptions)

December 6th	What Women Want!
April 5-6	Great Country Farms Season Opener
Saturdays April - May	Great Country Farms' Greenhouse Days April 5, 12, 19, 26 and May 17, 24, and 31 from 9 am to noon
May 17-18	Spring Farm Tour & Strawberry Picking
May 24-25	Great Country Farms' Strawberry Jubilee
June 1-30	Great Country Farms' Pumpkin Growing Contest Plant Pick-up
July 13	Members' Day Celebration
August	Brambles Ball (Concept)
August 16th & 17	Dog Days Sunflower & Berry Festival
September 7	Hillside Barn Launch Event
September 13 & 14	Raspberry & Cider Festival (Canceled)
September 27-October 31	10th Anniversary Fall Pumpkin Harvest

Fall Harvest Family Days	Fall Harvest Family Days - Special events during Fall Pumpkin Harvest **October 5** - Pumpkin Growing Contest **(Click Here to see the Winner of the Contest!)** **October 12** - Pet Costume Contest **October 19** - Costume Day **October 26**- Pumpkin Carving Contest **November 1-2** - Pumpkin Chunkin' Weekend
Nov 28-Dec 23	Christmas Tree Sales

April 5-6 Great Country Farms Season Opener
After a long cold winter nothing chases away the chill like a visit to the farm. Come see our spring babies, bottle feed the calves, pick some lettuces, take a hayride, romp in the new green grass of spring! We have 2 new miniature Donkeys in our Farm Animal Barnyard in need of names! Come meet them and submit your ideas for names for these furry little jennies! Break out your fishing pole and fish in our stocked pond. Be sure to visit the Country Store filled with new jams, jellies, local honey and freshly baked pies and goodies. Great Country Farms is open daily, 9am to 5pm April 5– October 31st. Admission: $2.50/person or $10.00/carload (Festival Admission applies May 25 & 26 and weekends in October.)

BACK TO CALENDAR

Great Country Farms' Greenhouse Days
Visit our new greenhouse and choose your spring annuals and combination hanging baskets from our huge selection. We will open our wholesale greenhouse to the public on Saturdays in April and May from 9 am to noon. Benefit from buying directly from the growers and brighten your spring with amazing color and selection! Purchases in flat quantities only. The greenhouse will be open April 5, 12, 19, 26 and May 17, 24, and 31 from 9 am to noon. Check our website for products we will have available each weekend at www.greatcountryfarms.com and be sure to sign up for our email notices to have all the details.

BACK TO CALENDAR

May 17-18 Spring Farm Tour & Strawberry Picking
Loudoun County Farms open their doors for visitors this weekend. Come enjoy picking your own strawberries and spring greens in the garden, brush the goats in our Farm Animal Barnyard, visit the baby

animal barn, do some catch and release fishing, take a hayride, visit our country store, taste some Kettle Corn and enjoy lunch from the "Roosteraunt" which will be serving BBQ, burgers and snacks this weekend. Pick up a pie to take home! Open daily, 9am to 5pm. Activity Admission: $2.50/person or $10.00/carload.

BACK TO CALENDAR

May 24-25 Great Country Farms' Strawberry Jubilee
Join us for the largest Strawberry Festival in Loudoun! Welcome spring with our strawberry packed weekend. To celebrate everything strawberry the Jubilee is packed with contests, special events and great food. Don't miss the Diaper Derby (decorate your little's diaper for the big race), the Fish-a-Rama fishing contest, Pig Calling, Tart Toss, and the crowning of the Royal Strawberry Queen and her court! Special Events include musical performances, our infamous Oinintucky Derby Pig Races, pick your own strawberries, strawberry planting and freezer jam making seminars, hayrides, pony rides ($3.00 each), face painting ($2 each), our Farm Animal Barnyard, play area with 3 mazes, swings, slides and more! And what better way to honor the amazing strawberry than by feasting on strawberry shortcake, sundaes and chocolate dipped berries? Our Roosteraunt will be serving up our famous BBQ and Kettle Corn all weekend. The Strawberry Jubilee is open from 9am to 5pm. Jubilee Admission is $5.00/person or $20.00/carload.

BACK TO CALENDAR

June 1-30 Great Country Farms' Pumpkin Growing Contest Plant Pick-up
Think you can grow the biggest, heaviest pumpkin around? Well here is your chance to show us your stuff! Come pick up a FREE pumpkin plant and growing instructions at Great Country Farms during the month of June (yes pumpkins are planted in June) and see if you can grow the biggest pumpkin around. What a great way to learn how pumpkins grow and develop all summer long. Then bring back your biggest pumpkin in October for weigh-ins and awards presentations! Contestants must be 15 years or younger to participate so claim your plant in June and let the growing begin!!! Click here for contest rules.

BACK TO CALENDAR

August 16 & 17 Dog Days Sunflower & Berry Festival
It may be the hottest part of the summer, but the Dog Days at Great Country Farms are all about fun with your family and canine companions! Bring the whole family for a romp in the sunflower and berry fields. Freshly baked pies will be featured as well. Enjoy hayrides, pony rides ($3.00 each), our Farm Animal Barnyard, play area with 3 mazes, swings, slides and more! Our Roosteraunt will be serving up our famous BBQ and Kettle Corn all weekend. The Festival is open from 9am to 5pm and admission is $5.00/person or

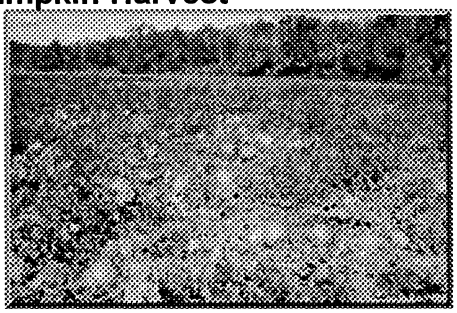
$20.00/carload.

BACK TO CALENDAR

September 13 & 14 Raspberry & Cider Festival (Canceled)
We're sorry but this event has been canceled due to circumstances beyond our control.

BACK TO CALENDAR

September 27-October 31 — Fall Pumpkin Harvest



Come visit the largest u-pick pumpkin patch in Northern Virginia and pick your pumpkin right off the vine! Meet P-Rex our new pumpkin munchin Dinosaur and see him in action each weekend from Sept 27 to Nov 3. **Activities:** visit our farm animal barnyard, take a hayride to the pumpkin patch and pick your pumpkin right off the vine, bring a pole and fish in our stocked pond, snack on all you can eat apples on site and zip down the 60' Saddlehorn slide all while enjoying panoramic views of the fall colors from our location at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. **On weekends & Columbus Monday: In addition to the weekday activities noted above.** See P-Rex crunch pumpkins and then enjoy our must-see Oinkintucky Derby Pig Racing shows on the hour from 11 am to 4 pm, pony rides ($3.00 each) and make a corn husk doll at our self-guided station.

Our Country Store is brimming with honey, fresh cider, baked goods, jams, jellies, Belgian mums, cornstalks, gourds, apples and lots of fall produce. Make us your weekend lunch stop and visit Bruce's "Roosteraunt" for Kettle corn, BBQ chicken, burgers, dogs and a slice of freshly baked pie!

At Great Country Farms, your family is sure to have a GREAT day! Admission from Sept 27-Oct.31 is $10/car or $2.50/person weekdays; $20/car or $5.00/person weekends and Columbus Day.

Click here to learn more about Great Country Farms Fall Harvest

BACK TO CALENDAR

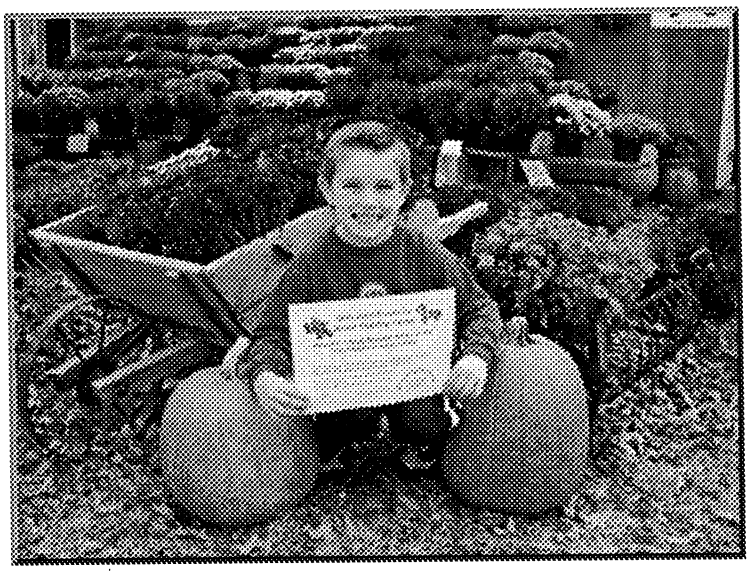
Fall Harvest Family Days

Great Country hosts Family Fun Days on Sundays during Fall Harvest 2003.

October 5 Pumpkin Growing Contest— It's time to see

how those plants you picked up in the spring have produced!!! Bring your biggest pumpkin to the farm for weigh-in and display from 1 pm– 4 pm.

And the Winner is:



Gavin Mangolas, 5 years old, of Leesburg, VA is the winner of the 2003 Great Country Farms Pumpkin Growing Contest. The winning pumpkin weighed in at over 27 lbs. Gavin grew his award winning pumpkin on vines he started himself in June of 2003.

Great Country Farms provided the planting kits as well as pumpkin growing instructions to over 100 entrants in this first annual contest. Seeds were of the Howden Biggie variety which can produce pumpkins in the 25-40 lb range.

Congratulations Gavin!

October 12 Pet Costume Contest — Bring your pet in costume for a parade and prizes! Judging will begin at 2:30 on the pig racing track. First prize is a 2004 season pass (good for admission from April 2004-October 2004—a $150.00 value). Second prize is $25 gift certificate to our Country Store and/or Roosteraunt. Third prize is a large bag of our famous Kettle Corn. Please have pets on a leash or in a protected carrier. All dogs must display a current rabies tag! Please be prepared to keep your pet

with you for the day—no pets should be left in cars.

October 19 Costume Day— Put on your Halloween finest and enjoy a day on the farm! Wear a costume and receive a free bag of kettle corn with your paid admission to the farm. (1 small bag/costume/paid admission)

October 26 Pumpkin Carving Contest— Come to the farm, choose your pumpkin, pick up your carving kit and create your masterpiece!! A $10.00 entry fee covers your pumpkin and carving knife (and includes farm admission as well!) All carvings must be completed for judging by 4:30 pm. Three categories will be available for entries: Children's Carving: children 10 and under may enter their jack o'lantern. Teen Carving: For ages 11 to 16 years. Open Carving: Entries by groups and those over 16 year of age. Judging will be at 4:30 pm. The carver(s) need not be present to win. In each category, first prize is a $25.00 gift certificate to the farm. Second prize is a large bag of Kettle corn and a gallon of cider. Third prize is a large bag of our famous Kettle Corn. One prize per winning entry so first prize in group entries will have to designate a single winner of the season pass. of the season pass.

Click here to learn more about Great Country Farms Fall Harvest

BACK TO CALENDAR

November 1 & 2 Pumpkin Chunkin' Weekend

Wondering what to do with your leftover jack-o'lanterns? Well bring them to Great Country Farms for a Pumpkin Smashin' session! We will have all sorts of ways to dispose of your pumpkin including a launcher, pumpkin drop, choppers and lots of farm animals that love pumpkins. Take a hayride to pick more pumpkins! We will also bake a huge pumpkin pie— fresh pumpkins of course —and have all our fall harvest activities available including hayrides, swings, slides and mazes. So come enjoy one last weekend of family fun on the farm for the 2003 season.

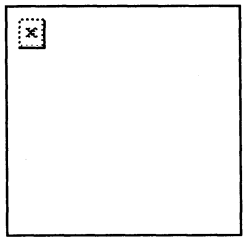
Click here to learn more about Great Country Farms Fall Harvest

NEW EVENT!

December 6th What Women Want

"WHAT WOMEN WANT"

One-Stop-Shopping-Extravaganza!



Avoid the crowded malls and shop comfortably!

Saturday, December 6, 2003
10:00AM 'til 2:00PM
Great Country Farms, 18780 Foggy Bottom Rd.
Bluemont, VA

Stampin' Up - Wonderful rubber stamps & supplies for scrapbooks, cards and gifts!

Mary Kay - Fragrances, Bath products, Skin Care, Cosmetics, & many more fabulous gifts!

Premier Jewelry - Beautiful, High Fashion Jewelry and Gift Items at affordable prices!

Southern Living - Home Accessories, Gifts, Bake Ware & more, reflecting Southern Living!

Tastefully Simple - Gourmet Food that's quick and easy to prepare!

Pampered Chef - Wrap up your Holiday shopping w/Kitchen tools, cookbooks, & creative gifts!

Discovery Toys - Educational toys, books, games & software for infants & children of all ages!

Party Lite Candles - See the Sparkle and the Glow of Candlelight!

Pursonalities - Designer purses at deep discount prices
Plus hand made pottery, crafts, and more

•Lots of Door Prizes! Drawings every 1/2 hour!
• Schedule a Show & get a Special Gift!
•All orders will arrive in time for the holidays!

BACK TO CALENDAR

Fall Harvest | Special Events | Strawberry Jubilee

Tailwinds Bed & Breakfast

elax in country comfort in our restored Victorian rmhouse; watch horses graze from your win-ow, visit with Jeepers the goat, and help gather e eggs from the henhouse. After a hearty farm reakfast, take a riding lesson or go fishing at ailwinds, or follow us to Fair Hill for a trail ride r carriage ride.

lorse Owners: Bring your horses and stable iem overnight in our beautiful 17-stall barn. Ride i our indoor ring or trailer 10 minutes to Fair Hill or unlimited riding on 5,000 gorgeous acres. Ve are minutes away from special attractions in Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania.

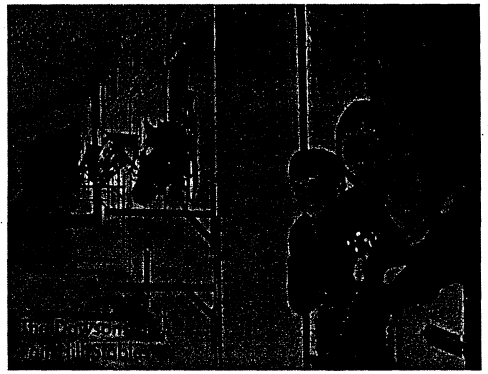
$75.00/room/night

$25.00/stall/night (includes hay, grain, turnout.)

Check-in time: 3:00 - 8:00 pm. Check-out time: 11:00 am No deposit required. Cancellations 7 days prior to arrival equested. Children 8 and over welcome.

Fee Fishing & Fish Tournaments

A great family activity! On the pond at Tailwinds, beginning in the summer of 2000. Call (410) 658-8187 for details.



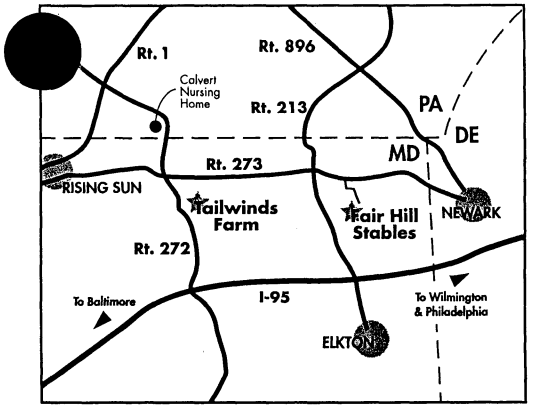
About The Dawsons

Ted and JoAnn Dawson combine years of business and horse experience, first as owners of Fairview Follies, a carriage and pony ride business, then as managers of Carousel Farm & Riding Stables in Wilmington, DE from 1986 to 1998.

JoAnn has a B.S. degree from the University of Delaware in Animal Science/Ag Education and a Masters Degree in Education and has taught Animal Science and Equine Science at both high school and college levels. She has successfully competed at local and regional hunter shows and events and sits on the board of the Delaware Horse Show Association. She is a member of the Maryland Horse Council, the Maryland Tourism Committee, the North American Horseman's Association and a board member of the Fair Hill Nature Center. Through her membership in the Screen Actors Guild she works in film and television as an actress and horse wrangler, most recently on *Beloved*, *The Sixth Sense*, and *America's Most Wanted*.

Ted holds a B.S. degree from the University of DE in Business Administration and Finance. He has an extensive farming background, including dairy, crops, livestock and fish farming. He is a member of the Farm Bureau as well as the North American Horseman's Association.

The Dawsons' two boys, Zachary and Nicholas, enjoy all sports, including horseback riding!



We are only minutes from
Newark or Wilmington, DE & Elkton, MD;
one hour from Philadelphia and Baltimore!

Open daily year round!
Gift certificates available.

Please call for reservations for any of our services.
Same-day reservations accepted for trail rides and carriage rides.

(Subject to availability.)

Services at Fair Hill Stables are in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Cash or checks accepted.

All prices subject to 6% Maryland amusement tax.

FairWinds Fa[illegible] Stables, Inc.
Providi[illegible]es at:

Fair Hill Stables

Fair Hill State Park
Route 273, Entrance 3
Fair Hill, MD

(410) 620-3883

and

TAILWINDS FARM
NORTH EAST, MARYLAND

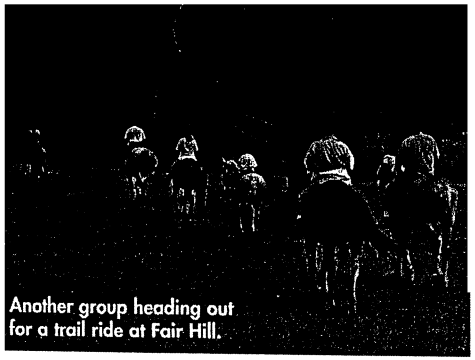
41 Tailwinds Lane
North East, MD 21901

(410) 658-8187

www.fairwindsstables.com

Trail Rides ♦ Riding Lessons
Horse-drawn Carriages ♦ Hay Rides
Pony Rides ♦ Summer Camp
Horse Shows ♦ Special Events
Bed & Breakfast

Ted & JoAnn Dawson
Owners/Operators



Another group heading out for a trail ride at Fair Hill.

Guided Trail Rides

Our one-hour trail rides on quiet, dependable horses through breathtaking woods and fields will help you get away from it all. You'll see why Fair Hill was chosen as the film location for Oprah Winfrey's "Beloved." And you may be riding one of the horses used in the film! Children must be at least 3 years old.

1 hour trail ride . . . . . .$25.00 per person
Children (8-12) . . . . . .$20.00 per person
Organizations . . . . . .$20.00 per person

Pony Rides

For the little ones!! At Fair Hill Stables we offer pony rides every Sat. & Sun. 12-3pm or for weekday groups by reservation.

$2.00 per ride
$25.00 per 1/2 hour
$50.00 per hour

To book ponies at your location for birthday parties, fairs, events, etc. please call Tailwinds Farm.

$90.00/hour . . . . . .One pony
$75.00/hour (each) . . .Two or more ponies

Carriage Rides

Great for special occasions! Your choice of a 1/2 hour ride to the Fair Hill Inn for dinner (we drive your car over for you!), a 1 hour ride through the park or a "Carriage Picnic" which includes a 1/2 hour ride to the Covered Bridge, a picnic lunch on a blanket by the pond, and a 1/2 hour ride back to the stable. What could be more romantic?

1/2 hour ride to the Inn $40.00
1 hour ride $75.00
Carriage picnic $125.00
Driving Lessons . . . . . .$35.00 per hour

To rent carriages for weddings, festivals, etc., call Tailwinds Farm.

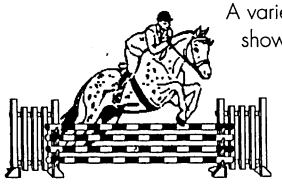
We also offer sleigh rides when there's enough snow! Call for availability.

Hayrides

A one hour tractor-drawn hayride through woods and fields at Fair Hill followed by a cozy bonfire is a great activity for your group or organization. Hayrides of up to six wagons (25 people per wagon) are offered year round.

$75.00 per wagon (includes bonfire)
$65.00 per wagon (no bonfire)
$100 per wagon per hour off premises at your location

Horse Shows



A variety of spring and summer shows are offered including Paper Chases, Dressage and Schooling shows in "The Big Ring." Call for a prize list. Fall Series of shows to be held in the indoor ring at Tailwinds Farm.

Riding Lessons

Beginner through advanced lessons are taught by qualified instructors both at Fair Hill Stables and in the indoor ring at Tailwinds Farm.

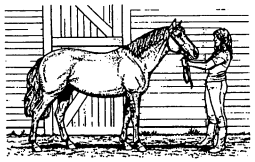
Group lesson . . . . . .$25.00 per hour
Semi-private lesson . . . .$30.00 per hour
Private lesson . . . . . .$35.00 per hour

Birthday Parties

Your choice of a trail ride, hayride and/or pony rides at Fair Hill will make your birthday party fun for all ages. Must be over 8 years old for trail rides. Parties also held at Tailwinds with pony rides, a petting zoo and fishing in the pond. Call for prices and reservations.

Summer Camp

Children ages 8-13 learn all about safety, riding and horse care through hands-on experience. Then kids can show off what they've learned at our Friday camp show and bar-be-que. Residential camp offered the last two weeks of August.



Day Camp: Mon. - Fri. 9am - 4pm $220.00
Extended hours: 8am - 5pm . . . . . .$5.00/hr.
Residential Camp: Sun. - Fri. $435.00

Horse Covers Program

Originally developed for Girl Scouts to earn their badge, this program is offered to other groups as well, covering grooming, tacking and horse care with a hands-on approach. Followed by a mounted demonstration and ride in the ring. May also include a one hour trail ride upon request.

$15.00 per person (lecture & ring lesson)
$35.00 per person (includes trail ride)

School Trips

Teachers choose one or a combination of six different activities: carriage rides, pony rides, hayride, grooming and saddling demonstration, ring riding at a walk or a trail ride. Plans may be made at the stables only, or begin at the stables and continue at the Fair Hill Nature Center where we transport the children via hayride.

$2.00 per child each activity except:
$4.00 per child for ring riding
$20.00 per child for trail ride (must be 8 or older)

Horse Sense Class

If you love horses, want to know more about them, or are thinking of buying one, this 10 week class is for you. Hands-on experience in selection, conformation, feeding, stabling, first aid, breeds, colors, markings, etc. is taught by JoAnn on Tuesdays in the Spring and Fall from 6pm - 8pm at Tailwinds Farm. Call (410) 658-8187 for exact dates and to register.

Special Events

We love Christmas. **Santa** spends a weekend in his sleigh at Fair Hill Stables, listening to the little one's requests. Afterwards, take a pony ride and carriage ride and visit with the horses in their stalls. Second weekend of Dec., 12-3 pm.

At Tailwinds, we remember the reason for the season: A **Live Nativity** in the stable, with music, the reading of the Christmas story, Bible characters in costume and, of course, the animals. Third weekend of Dec., 6:00-8:00 pm.

In April, Tailwinds Farm presents **"Horseplay - A History of Man and Horse."** This one-of-a kind drama chronicles the age-old relationship between man and horse with music, characters in costume, and live horses in action. A must-see for horse lovers! Call 410-658-8187 for date and time.

Don't miss these special events!

Oregon Agri-Tourism Industry

Marketing Plan

June 1997

Oregon Tourism Commission

Oregon Department of Agriculture

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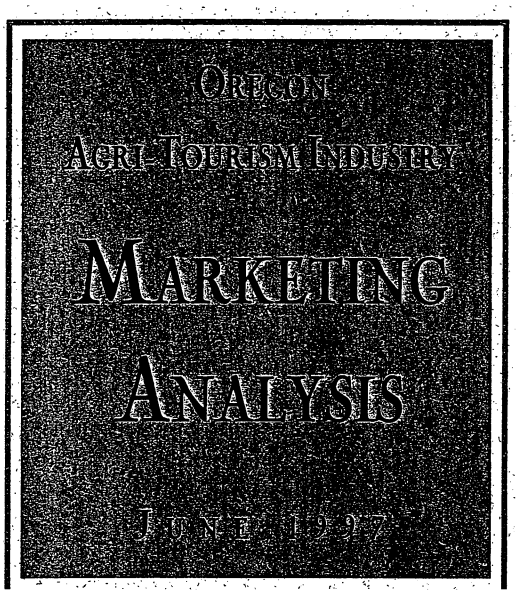
Executive Summary

This marketing plan provides guidance for those agriculture and tourism organizations that seek to establish a growing and profitable agritourism industry in Oregon. Market Advantage recommends programs, policies, and tasks to (1) establish the organizations, systems, and programs on which the continuance and growth of agritourism depend, (2) build target audience awareness and interest in agritourism, and (3) produce a 50 percent increase in the level of agritourism expenditures within four years.

To accomplish the goal of establishing a growing and profitable industry, this plan calls for a minimum expenditure of $104,000 for the launch year and at least $55,000 a year thereafter. During the first year, to build awareness of agritourism products and services, we recommend a $35,000 expenditure for advertising and $3,500 each for public relations and sales promotions. We recommend an expenditure of $25,000 for marketing research to provide insight and direction for planning and to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing programs. We recommend a budget of $10,000 for advertising and collateral production. To help ensure a high-quality visitor experience, $6,000 is budgeted for industry training and workshops, and $3,500 is budgeted for interpretive programs. Finally, we recommend a $15,000 expenditure for a half-time customer service position, $1,500 for fundraising, and $1,000 for professional memberships.



Oregon Tourism Commission

Oregon Department of Agriculture

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Executive Summary

Across the nation, agriculturists face increasing challenges from adverse changes in the marketplace. Labor prices are high. Commodity prices are low. Competition for dwindling natural resources is increasing. To successfully adapt to such challenges, America's farmers and ranchers are seeking ways to diversify and increase their revenue.

In 1995, a number of public and private organizations formed a partnership to help Oregon farmers and ranchers augment their income through agriculture-related tourism. The goal of this partnership, the Farm/Ranch Recreation Resource Team, is to establish a growing and profitable agritourism industry.

The Oregon agritourism industry has many strengths on which it can capitalize. Key strengths include the industry's (1) proximity to fast-growing urban areas, (2) vast, natural beauty, (3) diversity of wildlife, (4) reputation for fine wines, foods, and craft beers, and (5) partnership with a strong and effective state tourism commission.

Most of the market opportunities facing the Oregon agritourism industry stem from two socioeconomic trends: increasing population density in the West and the "graying of America." Increasing population density drives demand for recreation opportunities in nature, away from crowds. Overcrowding on public recreation lands means that urbanites will increasingly turn to private recreation lands to seek escape. The "graying of America" is creating cultural changes that drive demand for *edutainment*, adventure, and participatory escapism—product benefits that Oregon agritourism is uniquely qualified to deliver.

While there is much that is positive about the Oregon agritourism industry's marketing situation, there are factors that could hinder the industry's success. Key weaknesses or threats include (1) the industry's lack of expertise and resources, (2) the limited drawing power of most individual attractions, (3) regulation, and (4) intense competition. In the Oregon Agritourism Industry Marketing Plan, which is bound separately, we recommend strategies to minimize these weaknesses and threats.

MARKETING CRAFTS AND TOURIST PRODUCTS

A research team...compiled information from 1,400 individuals on marketing crafts and tourists' shopping habits... After meals and lodging, tourists spend most of their dollars on clothing, crafts, and local food products.

If you sell crafts, a study on tourists' shopping habits, by the North Central Regional Extension Service, may give you ideas for meeting consumer desires and increasing sales.

A research team from Iowa, Minnesota, and Nebraska compiled information from 1,400 individuals on marketing crafts and tourists' shopping habits. Shopping is an important activity for tourists. After meals and lodging, they spend most of their tourist dollars on clothing, crafts, and local food products. Almost 70 percent buy gifts for future events and for mementos.

Tourists want crafts to use and display in their homes. They enjoy seasonal items. Their favorite craft medium is wood, followed by items made from other natural materials and fabric. They appreciate appealing colors, design, high quality workmanship, a fair price, and innovation. They look for items that can be used (not just displayed) in their homes, things to add to collections, and jewelry. Their craft purchases often have symbolic value; they may become valued reminders of the places they visited, especially if the crafts reflect local sites or events. Tourists appreciate neatly arranged displays that show how to use the crafts. They appreciate written information on care, safety, and materials used. The tourists surveyed indicated there were not enough crafts made from leather and glass, hand-crafted toys, jewelry, and clothing. They said there were too many crafts made of fabric, paint, and paper and crafts for display (not to use).

Tourists find places to buy crafts by reading state travel office-generated information; newspaper and magazine articles; guidebooks; talking to friends, hotel personnel and local residents; and from local newspaper ads.

Tourists spend from $5 to $30 per item, depending on for whom they are buying.

They value sales personnel who are pleasant and knowledgeable, but will let them browse.

The most successful craft producers promoted themselves and their products by providing business cards and hang tags, signing their work, using logos, and providing written data. They worked an average of 55 hours a week, concentrated on one particular medium, had few items in a product line, identified themselves as artist or designer rather than artisan, craftsman, folk artist, or hand crafter. Over 65 percent were male. Males charged two to four times the amount that women charged.

The average craft producer was 47 years old, from a rural community, educated through or beyond high school, had been in business nine years, contributed 25 percent of the household's income. Primary media used were wood, fabric, and clay. They sold most products at art and craft fairs and from their own homes.

The researchers suggested that to increase income, crafts producers should:

- Review promotional practices.
- Review prices.
- Provide tourist items for which demand exceeds availability.
- Continue to create original designs.
- Review professional work habits.
- Stay alert to tourist interests.
- Consider "value added services"—gift wrap, shipping, monogramming, accepting credit cards.
- Provide written information on care, safety, and use.
- Display crafts to show possible uses.
- Localize products by incorporating a name or design motif.
- Be friendly, but let people browse.
- Explain craft techniques and ways to use the crafts.
- Explain which items make good gifts.

For more information:

Marketing Crafts and Other Products to Tourists: A Guide for Craft Producers, Craft Retailers, Communities, Tourist Attractions, and Hospitality Services. 1992. North Central Regional Extension Pub. #445. University of Nebraska, IANR Communications and Computing Services, Lincoln, NE 68583-0918; (402) 472-3023.

Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism

Pairing farms with entertainment can draw families -- and their recreational dollars. Seasonal festivals, hayrides, petting zoos, on-farm classes and workshops bring more potential customers to your farm. Another option for recreational farming is leasing wooded land or marginal cropland for hunting, fishing or hiking.

You can weave farm entertainment events with regional tourism efforts. The Archway Regional Tourism Association (ARTA) in eastern Kentucky links local farmers with Natural Bridge State Park. For small farmers looking for alternatives to tobacco, agri-tourism in this region -- known for its scenic resorts and parks -- has been a godsend.

Growers sell at a farmers market inside the park each summer as part of the Mountain Market Festival. Widely publicized by ARTA, the event features chef presentations and live music. Every farmer who participates sells out.

"We wanted to help the agri-tourism organization become self-sustaining, and it has done that," says Karen Armstrong-Cummings, who works with area farmers as a staff member of the Commodity Growers Cooperative. The cooperative received a SARE grant in 1997 to help it build markets for local farm products.

Tree growers have helped spawn popular "Christmas in the Mountains" weekends. Participants receive coupons for a Christmas tree from a local farm and a gift from a local craftperson or artist.

The coupons were a strong draw, Armstrong-Cummings says, bringing people from as far away as Louisville.

The partnership, which includes Extension agents, farmers, craftsmen and parks officials, helped the Commodity Growers Corporation create a statewide agritourism award to recognize projects that bring together farmers and tourism. The first $500 award went to Owensboro orchardist Billy Reid, whose apple festival brings 20,000 people to the city.

If you're interested in entertainment farming or agri-tourism, keep in mind:

- Agri-tourism ends farmer isolation and offers the opportunity to make new friends and build stronger links to the community.
- Some disadvantages could include interference with main farm activities, potential low financial return and high liability risk.
- In the tourist business, you are never really off duty. Holidays likely mean a full workday. Be prepared for late-night calls.
- Social skills and a scenic, clean, attractive farm are crucial for success in agri-tourism and can overcome a location that is less than ideal.
- Call tour bus companies and your local or regional tourism and convention bureau for information on attracting tour buses to your farm.
- State Departments of Agriculture often offer assistance in setting up farm festivals and similar activities. State tourism bureaus also can offer a wealth of ideas and information.