

SMALL FARM *digest*

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Farmers Markets: Recipe and Ingredients for Success

A farmer, rancher, or small farm specialist from a land-grant university; community-based organization; or federal, state, or local government contributes this feature article. The guest author this issue is Dr. Desmond A. Jolly, Extension Agricultural Economist, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California-Davis, and Director, University of California Small Farm Program.

In the overall context of the U.S. food distribution and retailing sector, farmers markets still represent a faint blip on the radar screen. But they are a growing presence, and for thousands of farmers and millions of consumers the benefits of farmers markets are readily apparent. These benefits account for the impressive growth in the number and sales of farmers markets over the past decade.

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), through biannual surveys, has been tracking changes in farmers markets since 1996, and USDA's agricultural census has been collecting data on farmers who use direct marketing methods in selling their products. In its 1994 survey, AMS surveyed 1,755 identified markets. They found that 20,496 farmers reported using farmers markets as a marketing outlet – 6,648 as their sole outlet. These markets served 915,774 customers per week.

The AMS 2000 study found 2,863 farmers markets – an increase of 63 percent; 66,700 farmers utilizing them, and a customer base of 2,760,000 customers. Farmer vendors had increased by 225 percent, and customers by 200 percent. With this growth rate, farmers markets, by 2010, could be a meaningful presence in the food marketing system and help propel us towards a more sustainable small farm



Nashville's Farmers Market draws a diversity of customers. (See story on page 4.) A Glimpse at Successful Farmers Markets-Nashville's Farmers Market-Nashville, Tennessee. – PHOTO BY JIM CUPIT.

sector. Though not all farm vendors are small-scale producers, the majority are.

In a recent study of farmers who sell at California's farmers markets, nearly 85 percent of the 427 respondents had incomes below \$250,000; another 5 percent had incomes between \$250,000 and \$499,000.

Customer Benefits and Customer Profiles. Since supermarkets are, with the exceptions of some inner city and rural areas, found everywhere, farmers markets must present customers with a set of differentiated product attributes to gain a competitive advantage with their customers. And the customers themselves might be differentiated with respect to their demographic and psychographic characteristics.

In his study of customers at San Diego farmers markets, Ramiro Lobo found that the attributes that motivated patronage of the markets were customer perceptions of: freshness, quality, taste, locally grown, desire to help local farmers, nutritional value, and atmosphere (in order of importance). Ranking lower on the list of attributes were – best value, convenience and price. Parenthetically we might observe that these latter attributes are those most commonly associated with

supermarkets. Other customer surveys generally support these findings.

With regard to the demographic profile, surveys show customers to be predominantly female, Caucasian, highly educated, with high incomes in the Lobo study and 35 percent of customers had incomes over \$60,000, with 14 percent over \$100,000 per year. Customers bought nearly half their weekly purchase of produce from the farmers market and spent between \$16 and \$20 per shopping trip – varying by location.

Like the consumption of organic products, patronage of farmers markets seem to have acquired a certain status and fits into a number of lifestyle packages. Their emerging role is reflected in the way certain lifestyle magazines such as *Sunset*, *Gourmet*, *Bon Appetit* and others portray and position farmers markets. And, a number of cookbooks use farmers market themes in their recipes and marketing.

Implications for small farm advocates
The healthy growth in numbers of farmers markets and customer patronage indicates that farmers markets can be one important component of a set of strategies that can enhance the prospects for sustaining small- and moderate-scale

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farms as integral parts of the US production agriculture landscape. But this very success can lead to overly optimistic and well meaning but naive efforts to establish new farmers markets and/or to grow established ones.

Laying a sound foundation Apart from the small, informal group of farmers assembling at a common location at a specified time, the success of farmers markets begins with a sound organizational foundation. Organizational leadership is, of course, a prerequisite whether in the organizational or operational phases of the market.

The organizational leader develops the vision but is also responsible for pulling together an effective, committed organizing team. They and the team must build support among local civic and business groups, as well as canvas, recruit and secure a critical mass of local growers who will produce for and market their products through the market.

The organizing team will develop an inventory of assets – people, organizations and constituencies that can facilitate successful establishment. They will also identify the potential constraints including the regulatory requirements with which the market must comply. Regulations vary by state and locality, thus time and energy invested in unearthing this information is a worthwhile investment of resources.

But the most critical element to the short-and-long-run success of the market is the farmers and other vendors who will support the market. Hence, there is need for an objective assessment of how many farmers are likely to sell through the market; the diversity, seasonality and quantity of produce they are capable of generating; and their level of commitment – best secured with a written obligation.

The level of commitment may depend, in part, on whether, and to what extent, the farmers are involved in the development and organizational phases of the market. It is not necessary that all farmers be involved in every stage or every decision. It is important that they be invited to participate and are kept informed, to the extent feasible, of

proposed developments. If there is a broad-based representative Board of Directors, some farmers may elect to run for membership.

Site selection. Location! Location! Location! That successful retailing is related to location holds equally for farmers markets as for other types of retail. A good location is a critical ingredient in the recipe for building a successful market.

Some of the evaluative criteria include: centrality – a central location in the geographic area maximizes access for potential customers; safety – consumers should feel safe in traveling to and from the site; configuration – being able to accommodate two rows of vendors is optimal but not critical, particularly for smaller markets; visibility; parking – our society is, apart from densely populated urban centers on the East Coast, an automobile culture.

The site should, at a minimum, be easily accessible to public transportation. Customer and public health facilities are also important – water to clean stalls, spigots for customers, and restrooms with a baby-changing area and handicapped access. If inclement weather is a prime consideration, then shade and shelter are positive additional features.

Governance and management Beyond the small association of a few farmers, successful farmers markets require good structures of governance and management. Markets may be operated as for-profit or not-for-profit entities. Business structure alternatives include – sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations or cooperatives or a non-profit association.

Some markets, such as the 38 weekly markets that operate in 28 locations around New York City, are sponsored by and operate under the umbrella of the Greenmarket Program for the Environment of New York City. Southland Farmers Market Association in Los Angeles also operates and manages a number of markets.

Other markets are single market operations governed by a Board of Directors and managed by a paid manager. The Board of Directors is responsible for setting long-range goals and developing strategic plans. The Board, with the assis-

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tance of the manager sets policies and fees, develops and enforces market rules, establishes operational budgets, provides direction to the manager, ensures that the market is adequately insured against liability and provides for conflict resolution, when necessary.

Depending on the market's mission and governance structure, some boards may be comprised entirely of farmers, some of non-farmers, or a mix of farmers, community and other representatives. The Board develops and enforces market rules including rules of eligibility, membership requirements, types of products the market will carry, who makes which types of decisions and how conflicts will be addressed or resolved.

There needs to be a procedure for admitting new vendors a policy on admissible products, on the responsibilities of the market and the board's obligations vis-a-vis vendors, customers and the community. Farmers market integrity has gained significance in direct correlation with the increase in the popularity of farmers markets. If there is a policy of "locally grown" or producer-only sales, there needs to be a process for verification, certification and enforcement.

The manager is as critical to the success of a farmers market as the board, if not more so, since it is the manager with whom vendors and customers come in contact on a weekly basis. The board should choose and reinforce someone with the requisite sets of skills and abilities to maximize the chances for success.

Managers should be good leaders – decisive but not domineering. They must be objective and fair in negotiations with vendors. If they have a strong agricultural interest and are community focused it adds to their assets. Organizational and communication skills are critical. They need to stay informed and ideally should have some creative abilities i.e., to think out-of-the-box!

A market manager must diplomatically and effectively manage multiple sets of relationships – with vendors, a Board of Directors or something similar, with customers and other businesses and civic organizations.

Critical skills that the manager will utilize in successfully negotiating this com-

plex maze of relationships include skills in time management, delegation, communication and conflict resolution. In terms of personal traits, successful managers tend to be: confident, optimistic, decisive, creative, respectful, trustworthy and ethical.

It is the manager who leads in setting goals for the organization and in communicating them to the various constituencies. It is the manager, in an operational context, who assesses resources, sets timelines and organizes people, including volunteers, to achieve these goals.

The manager also leads evaluation efforts as to outcomes. The manager will develop critical information about vendors and customers through formal means, such as surveys, and less formal means such as suggestion boxes and bulletin boards, and a keen listening ear.

Marketing and merchandising. Where the rubber ultimately meets the road are in the areas of marketing and merchandising. First the market needs to be marketed to the community and then products must be effectively marketed to customers.

Marketing the market can be done through advertising or promotion or some combination of both, depending on budget and the nature of the community. Advertising costs money and should be used judiciously with keen attention to cost effectiveness.

Publicity is free advertising, at least as far as out-of-pocket cash is concerned, though effective publicity takes time and thought. Local newspapers and television welcome stories and features with rich color and human interest.

Seasonal themes such as the onset of summer harvest, Thanksgiving, Halloween, end-of-harvest and a myriad of other possibilities offer constant and endless opportunities to generate publicity for the market. The limit is the manager's imagination, energy and time to coordinate these ideas. Public relations is another effective tool for marketing the market – creating effective and positive links with community-based and civic organizations, including other businesses.

But the most effective method of marketing the market is through satisfied customers. A pleasant ambience, fresh, attractively displayed, competitively

priced products, and attentive, pleasant vendors are the most critical ingredients for success.

In many localities, the market competes with the local supermarkets which typically offer convenience, parking and a wide selection of food and non-food products. And service has emerged as an added value for many supermarkets. Hence, farmers markets need to offer added values beyond convenience and competitive prices.

Studies indicate that consumers perceive farmers market produce to be fresher, of better quality, and representative of local producers. These are critical criteria that consumers bring to the market. The manager and vendors must constantly seek to monitor quality, pricing and service. Keep customer satisfaction uppermost in terms of evaluating performance.

Vendors can be helped in the merchandising of their products. Attractive displays help customers make choices. Free samples offer added incentives to buy. Eye-level displays are effective. Half-empty tables, buckets and baskets are a turn-off. Of course, today's consumers want their produce to be clean and free of dirt and debris.

Pricing varies with the territory. In some markets, prices are above comparable retail, in others they are below or relatively equal. In some areas, consumers expect a bit of a bargain at farmers markets. In others, they are primarily motivated by non-price attributes – freshness, quality, locally produced, organic and the like. Be sure your pricing policy matches the demographic and preference characteristics of the customers. A satisfied customer is the best marketing tool for the market.

References:

Lobo, Ramiro. *A Look at Certified Farmers Markets (CFM) Customers and their Willingness to Support Local Agriculture*. University of California Cooperative Extension, San Diego. 1999.

USDA – Agricultural Marketing Service, *US Farmers Markets – 2000: A Study of Emerging Trends*. May 2002.

A GLIMPSE AT SUCCESSFUL FARMERS MARKETS

- **Dane County Farmers Market, Madison, WI.** Prime location and quality farm-raised products make this 32-year-old farmers market, the largest producer only farmers market in the U.S., very successful. Three hundred vendors sell to an average of 22,000 people on any given Saturday. The market, which circles the state capital in the heart of the town square, runs year round. Indoor space is rented at the convention and senior centers during winter months. "Producer vendors offer fruits, vegetables, plants, flowers, eggs, honey, syrup, meat, cheese, baked goods, candy and pasta," says market manager Bill Warner. "City events held in the square help to draw even more customers to our market." See the market's Web site at: www.madfarmmkt.org
- **Davis Farmers Market, Davis, CA.** The Davis Farmers Market, situated in a downtown park, evidences the powerful community development tool that a farmers market can bring to a community. Health-conscious customers interested in organic produce, University of California faculty and students, and retirees patronize the market. "The key to building a sustainable market," says market manager Randi MacNear, "is for the farmers market to connect with the community. We allow 500 community organizations a table at the market. When we build community, then schools, the city, businesses, and university — everything — benefits." By state law, only CA producers can sell at this CA Certified Farmers Market. Throughout the year, 60 market spaces are filled from 150 members. Producers sell organic and non-organic fruits and vegetables, value-added products, crafts and nursery stock.
- **Union Square Greenmarket - New York City, NY.** Union Square Greenmarket is one of the most popular and biggest of 28 greenmarkets operated throughout five New York City boroughs. Run by the Council on the Environment, a non-profit organization within the mayor's office, 60 farmer vendors, from a 120-mile radius, encompassing Hudson Valley, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, offer a variety of products. An ethnically diverse population frequents the market. "What is significant about this farmers market in the midst of one of America's populated cities is that it brings a diverse community together and teaches urban dwellers about the rural community," says Tom Strumolo, acting director. "Farmers and customers love the personal contact." Top city restaurant chefs host cooking demonstrations. City restaurants use market produce and advertise the market as the source in their menus. The market attract millions of customers annually.
- **Nashville's Farmers Market - Nashville, Tennessee.** Nashville's Farmers Market has a rich history going back to 1784 legislation which created a 400-acre public square for a market house in the city's downtown. The market has been demolished, rebuilt, and moved to new locations. Now the Bicentennial Capital Mall State Park is home to the present indoor and outdoor state-of-the-art market facility. Between 30 local farmers and farmers from other states sell their products. Market rules allow resellers to buy farm-fresh produce from farmers and resell it to the public. The market has a strong international connection with 25 nationalities represented among vendors who sell their products through an Ethnic Flea Market that caters to an ethnic audience. "The success of a farmers market depends on communicating daily with your vendors," says market manager Jim Cupit. "Whatever a manager does to make the vendors successful makes the overall market successful." Cupit arranges events to create a wholesome family atmosphere. The market offers 300 free customer parking spaces and a free public meeting room which allows conference participants to patronize the market's diverse food service areas. See the market's Web site at: www.nashvillefarmersmarket.org
- **Santa Fe Farmers Market, Santa Fe, New Mexico.** The Santa Fe Farmers Market's busiest Saturdays draw 3,000 to 5,000 customers, including chefs from fine area restaurants, tourists, and diverse New Mexicans. The bustling market is famous for live musicians, a concession stand that sells local pastries and organic coffee, and quality products from 150 registered Northern New Mexican growers. Vendors abundant products include regional specialties like salsas and ristras (strung chiles). Market activities include a Farmers Market Fairy, a story teller who tells agricultural stories to children, and festivals. "What makes this farmers market unique," says manager Denise Cos, "is great community support from people who really value local agriculture and healthy, locally-grown food." Farmers have a stake in this grower's market which allows no reselling — only what is New Mexico grown. Market Board President and farmer, Don Bustos says, "the farmers market is a tool for economic development in rural areas and other places where manufacturing jobs are few and small

farms are the only way to generate revenue.” In Northern New Mexico the number of producers is growing. Bustos credits this growth to the strong technical assistance Extension agents at New Mexico State University give local farmers.

■ **Two Washington State Farmers Markets:** The University District Farmers Market in Seattle and the Olympia Farmers Market are two very different and successful farmers markets. One of the country’s most successful farmers markets, the University District Market, in one of Seattle’s most populated neighborhoods, attracts farmer vendors state- wide. “Quality products are the main reason for our success,” says manager Chris Curtis.

The Olympia Farmers Market, located in a small town, is a working farmer’s cooperative run by a farmer’s Board which allows only farmer vendors from a 4-county area to sell. “Located in an area of burned out downtown warehouses, the market is regarded as a cornerstone of redevelopment for the Olympia community,” says Will Carlsen, the market’s community relations manager. “Many businesses have relocated to be near the market which is seen as a business magnet. Our farmers market is what Main Street used to be. We are where the community comes and socializes. One of the greatest benefits of a farmers market is the sense of community and quality of life it brings to the neighborhood where it is located.” The Washington State Farmers Market Association requires the 75 markets they represent to collect sales data. “Collecting and analyzing sales data is critical to assessing the economic health of any business,” says Zachary Lyons, Executive Director of the Association.

SELECT RESOURCES

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets>

A wealth of information from USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service, including “Farmers Market Facts!”, the National Farmers Market Directory, resources and information, and a USDA Farmers Market Coloring Book.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fncs/>

From USDA’s Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, under FNS, click on “Food and Nutrition Service” to go to Nutrition Assistance Programs. Under the Food Stamp hot button, click on “Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT cards)” and go to “EBT & Farmers’ Markets.” There find out about various State Food Stamp EBT Farmers’ Market demonstrations and information about the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. See also the hot button, “WIC Program/Farmers’ Market” to find out about these programs.

USDA’s Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), established in 1992, provides additional coupons to WIC participants that they can use to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets. This program provides fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables from farmers markets to WIC participants who are at nutritional risk and also expands consumers’ awareness and use of farmers markets. The FMNP operates in 35 State agencies including four Indian tribes, one territory, and Guam.

On November 20, 2002, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) announced an opportunity for States, which include territories and federally recognized Indian tribal governments, to submit grant applications for the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) for fiscal year 2003. Grant applications were accepted through January 13, 2003, and the solicitation is now closed. A total of \$15 million for the SFMNP is available for grant awards in FY 2003. The SFMNP has been a competitive grant program for the last three years. FNS awards grants to eligible grantees, who are States, U.S. Territories, and Indian tribal governments, who in turn provide coupons to low-income seniors that may be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers markets, roadstand stands, and community-supported agriculture programs. For more information, contact Diane Kriviski at phone 703-305-2871 or via e-mail at Diane.Kriviski@fns.usda.gov.

Your Small Farm Neighbor **The Leyba-Campos Family** *Embudo, New Mexico*

Four generations of women live and work on the ruggedly beautiful 20-acre Leyba-Campos farm, "AlgoNativo," adjacent to the Rio Grande River near Espanola and Taos, New Mexico. The farm is located in a community of small farms and artists in an area of the country that enjoys world-wide visitors.

"Farming is an extension of who we are," proclaims 3rd generation family member, Margaret Campos. "We sell a variety of produce and flowers at the Santa Fe Farmers Market and offer a farm stay, farm tours, and cooking school. Cooking class participants get to be a farmer for the day. They enjoy a farm tour and harvest fresh locally-grown produce that they use to cook regional specialties like tortillas, roast chile, chicos and other native New Mexican meals which are prepared outdoors using an horno (traditional mud-oven). We want participants to have an appreciation of fresh fruits and vegetables and return home as farmers market converts. I am hoping to create support for small farmers."

"The whole idea of agri-tourism became so attractive to me," Campos says, "because in northern New Mexico, by virtue of the landscape, farms are small and spread out. It is hard to maintain profitability due to barriers so we had to find a way to remain profitable. We have tried many ways to make our farm sustainable like growing specialty produce, selling to high-end restaurants, trying food processing value-added products, different varieties, and season extension. We have neither the infrastructure for deliveries, an organized labor force such as migrant workers, or the extended season of California or Mexico to maintain profitability. The climate is not conducive to the same level of productivity and markets are far away so it is sure nice to get people to come to us."

"My family has sold just about

anything that can be grown in New Mexico for over the past fifty years," says Margaret Campos, "at our family's roadside farm stand and at farmers markets." The successful entrepreneurship of this farm family earned them a spot on the farm tours offered to participants of the 3rd National Small Farm Conference, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and co-sponsored by New Mexico State University, which was held in fall 2002 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Back in the fifties, the Leyba family sold corn, squash, chile and apples at a small farm stand next to the highway to Taos. Margaret's grandmother took the produce by wheelbarrow over a narrow footbridge across the Rio Grande River up to the trail to the stand. Margaret, her elderly grandmother, and aunt would sell for the day. When the farm stand was vandalized, the family started selling at the farmers market in Taos in the early seventies.

When Margaret's mother retired in the late 1980's, the family started growing lots of tomatoes and eggplant which they sold at the Santa Fe Farmers Market – a producer only market. At one point Margaret says her family was selling up to 36 tomato varieties and over 22 eggplant varieties not only at the farmers market but to many high-end Santa Fe and Taos restaurants.

Now the family sells exclusively at the Santa Fe Farmers Market and to a local farmer named Don Bustos who operates a community supported agriculture program on his farm, Santa Cruz Farms. While not certified organic, the Leyba-Campos use chemical-free growing practices and have been practicing organic methods for the last 13 years.

They have added more vegetables to their produce—artichokes, French filet beans, basil, 5 eggplant varieties, horseradish, endive, asparagus, three



The Leyba-Campos farm family sells their produce at the Santa Fe Farmers Market. — PHOTO BY JOAN COSTA.

kinds of corn, onions, multiple varieties of cabbage, thai, native and poblanos chile, cauliflower, cucumbers, brussel sprouts, broccoli, bell peppers, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, currants, strawberries and many herbs. Their orchard yields plums, apples, pears, quince, almonds, nectarines and cherries.

"We hope the farm stay, cooking school, and selling to loyal customers at the Santa Fe Farmers Market will provide the diversity of income we need to make our farm sustainable. Joaquin, my six-year-old son, is a hit at the farmers market. He has been going since he was six months old and is the best and youngest salesman you have ever met. His younger sister, Analisa, age four, is now in training. Brother and sister trade off on weekends at the market with grandma. We are in our second year of these enterprises and things look extremely promising. We are fortunate to live in an area that is beautiful, bountiful and serene. Most people who come to visit our farm never want to leave. The farm connects you to the earth in a real celebration of life."

A wide range of resources is available to assist small farmers and ranchers and their communities. Readers wishing further information about the resources listed below are asked to contact the individuals or offices listed for each item.



PRINT MEDIA

A Guide to Successful Direct Marketing. A guide by Dr. Charles Hall, extension specialist at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, applicable to any region of the country. The publication discusses successful techniques and strategies for marketing through farmers markets, roadside stands, and u-picks. Cost: \$12 payable to the Texas Extension Education Foundation. c/o Tracy Davis #8400. To order, contact Texas A&M University, Department of Agricultural Economics, 2124 TAMU, 449 Blocker Bldg., College Station, TX 77843-2124 (phone 979-845-1751; fax 979-845-3140; e-mail: tdavis@tamu.edu).

Dynamic Farmers' Marketing. Farmers wishing to sell farm products via local farmers' markets may be interested in *Dynamic Farmers' Marketing: A Guide to Successfully Selling Your Farmers' Market Products* by Jeff W. Ishee. The book covers farmers' market organization and rules, display methods, and other topics. The cost is \$19.95 (postage included). To order, go to <http://www.amazon.com>.

Farmers' Markets and Rural Economic Development Entrepreneurship, Small Business Incubation and Job Creation in the Rural Northeast. This publication from Cornell University's Community Food and Agriculture Program is a must for farmers' markets sponsors, extension staff and economic development officials. Reports on how farmers' markets contribute to local economic development. Cost: \$4.25. To order, phone 607-255-9832 or contact via e-mail at gcg4@cornell.edu.

The Flower Farmer. Author Lynn Byczynski gives a good introduction to starting a commercial cut flower business. Cost: \$24.95 plus \$4 s&h. Send to Growing for Market, PO Box 3747, Lawrence, KS 66046 or call 800-307-8949 to order with a credit card. See also at www.growingformarket.com a free issue of The



Flower Farmer which discusses displaying at a farmer's market, getting insurance and other pertinent articles. This pdf file can be downloaded as a "pdf" document. This requires Adobe Acrobat for viewing and printing.

Market Gardening: A Start-up Guide. This 16-page publication, produced by the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), addresses producing high-value crops and includes a discussion of farmers markets. A free PDF version of this document is available at: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/marketgardening.html>. Also available free in hard copy by calling ATTRA's Toll-free number 1-800-346-9140.

The New Farmers Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers & Communities. Authors Vance Corum, Marcie Rozenzweig, and Eric Gibson describe the best products to grow and sell at markets; combining farmer's markets with other outlets; record-keeping; displaying and merchandising; and starting, managing, and promoting markets, including special events. To order, send: \$24.95 plus \$4.50 shipping to: QP Distribution, 22260 C Street, Winfield, KS 67156. Call 888-281-5170 for credit card orders.

U.S. Farmers Markets 2000: A Study of Emerging Trends. This USDA Agricultural Marketing Service publication provides detailed farmers market information, including market management structure, total number of vendors, and average customer spending. Cost: download is free at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/publications>.



GRANTS, LOANS, TRAINING

USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program offers grants to eligible applicants in four regions (Northeast, North Central, Southern, and Western).

Southern Region SARE Program. The Southern Region serves Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Southern region offers the following upcoming competitive grant programs:

Sustainable Community Innovation Grants: Funds activities that link farm and non-farm activities for the benefit of rural communities. Co-funded by Southern Region SARE and Southern Rural Development Center. The Call for Proposals will be released on July 1, 2003. Proposal deadline is September 5, 2003. Awards, up to \$10,000, will be announced November 2003.

Producer Grants: Funds on-farm research and marketing projects by producers or producer organizations. The Call for Proposals will be released August 1, 2003. Proposal deadline is December 5, 2003. Awards, up to \$10,000 for individuals and up to \$15,000 for groups will be announced February 2004.

On-Farm Research Grants: Funds on-farm research and marketing projects by extension, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service or (non-government organizations) NGO personnel who currently work with producers. The Call for Proposals will be released August 1, 2003. Proposal deadline is December 5, 2003. Awards, up to \$15,000, will be announced February, 2004.

For more information, contact: Gwen Roland, Communications Specialist, Southern Region SARE, 1109 Experiment Street, Griffin, GA 30223 at Phone: (770) 412-4786; Fax: (770) 412-4789; via e-mail at groland@griffin.uga.edu or see Web site: <http://www.griffin.peachnet.edu/sare>

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service - Farmers Market Hotline:

1-800-384-8704

UPCOMING

EVENTS

| DATE | EVENT | LOCATION | CONTACT |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oct. 4-5 | <i>Hoes Down Harvest Festival</i> | Capay Valley, CA | http://www.hoesdownfestival.org |
| Nov. 6-8 | <i>11TH Annual Small Farm Trade Show and Conference</i> | Columbia, MO | Ron Macher - 1-800-633-2535 |
| Nov. 14-15 | <i>Third Annual The Soul of Agriculture: New Movements in New England Food and Farming</i> | Durham, NH | http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu or call 603-862-4088 |
| Nov. 8 | <i>Marketing and Small Farms Workshop: For Farmers Markets and Other Outlets</i> | Nashville, TN | Roy Bullock - 615-963-5449 |
| Feb. 2-7, 2004 | <i>North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association Annual Conference and Trade Show</i> | Sacramento, CA | 1-800- 325-3535 |

See Small Farm website (<http://www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm>) for the most up-to-date listing of events. We welcome submissions of events from our subscribers that would be of interest to the small farm community so that our Upcoming Events listing reflects a diversity of events from all regions of the country. Please

send submissions to Stephanie Koziski, Editor, Small Farm Digest, CSREES, USDA, Mail Stop 2216, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-2216 (phone: 202-401-6544; fax: 202-690-0289; e-mail skoziski@crees.usda.gov).

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