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Farmers Markets: Trends and Prospects

by Desmond Jolly, director, Small Farm Program, and extension economist, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, UC Davis

Generally, the economic performance of small family farms has been nothing to cheer about. And the recently passed Farm Bill 2002 has done little to encourage the notion that prospects will improve noticeably over the next decade. However, a number of innovations in production and farm management, and particularly in marketing, have created some of the brighter prospects in a generally hazy picture. Direct marketing, in general, and farmers markets in particular, have enabled the survival and growth of many smaller scale farm operations.

Trends

Farmers markets reemerged in the 1970s as a mechanism to connect farmers and consumers — providing farmers the opportunity to market their products at retail while enabling consumers access to farm-direct products. The move was a no-brainer. Even so, it took some effort to change the food marketing paradigm and the institutional and political inertia.

Consumers responded to the opportunity to move beyond the mass merchandising that characterized food marketing trends in the post-war industrial era. The resulting growth has been phenomenal. By the most recent USDA estimate, there were 2,863 farmers markets in 2000 – an increase of 63 percent over the 1990 total of 1,755. While still no challenge to the number or sales of supermarkets, sales of farmers markets are close to \$1 billion, totalling \$900 million in 2000.

On a broader level, direct marketing alternatives are increasingly used by farmers to market their products. The number of farms marketing directly grew from 86,432 in 1992 to 93,140 in 1997, according to the USDA survey. California experienced a 13 percent increase in these farms, going from 5,229 in 1992 to 5,901 in 1997. California also had the largest number of farms engaged in direct marketing: 5,901, followed by Texas: 5,226; Pennsylvania: 5,508; Ohio: 4,038; and Oregon: 4,539. Additionally, California had the second highest rate of increase in the average value of direct marketed products per farm: 80.3 percent, and the third largest increase in the total value of direct marketed products: 103.5 percent.

California was also first in the total value of direct marketed products: \$73,179,000. But in terms of the average value of direct market sales per farm: \$12,401, California ranked fifth, behind Rhode Island: \$17,210; Massachusetts: \$16,170; Connecticut: \$14,186; and New Hampshire: \$12,541.

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Diverse Markets Enjoy Success

Chavez Plaza Farmers Market

“The government shops here,” says Dan Best, market manager, as he surveys the suit and tie shoppers slipping in and out of food booths at Sacramento’s Chavez Plaza Certified Farmers Market. The downtown plaza wears a necklace of government buildings whose occupants regularly flood the Wednesday market during breaks and lunch hours.

Music from a mariachi band streams across the plaza to greet customers. Vendors call out “Free samples!” from brightly colored tents. Customers choose and then eat their selections under tall shade trees ringing the plaza.

The vibrant Wednesday market began in 1988 with 30 farmers. “It was an instant success,” says Best. Once an area frequented by shady characters, the revitalized plaza and its market receive tre-

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Director's Message

Celebrate Farmers Markets

When a few 'back-to-the landers' organized a farmers market in Davis back in the mid-1970s, few of us, including the organizers, could have imagined that it would become the central community institution that defines the public face and character of the city. This is not to depreciate the community value of one of the world's best public universities. But the public does not engage with the university the way it does with the farmers market.



Desmond Jolly

The Davis Farmers Market has evolved from rather humble beginnings — a dozen farmers or so selling off the backs of their pickups along the sidewalk at the northwest corner of Central Park.

But like other products of a 1970s cultural revolution against 'Wonder Bread' — natural foods, organic foods, herbal remedies, meditation, holistic medicine and others — it tapped a responsive chord among consumers, particularly the post-war 1960s generation. Recall that back in the '60s we were still caught in the web of a 'meat and potatoes' Midwest cuisine. Even in California, iceberg lettuce was *de riguer*.



Above and right: Shoppers stroll and a chef prepares a meal at the Davis Farmers Market.

It was the 'back-to-the landers,' the small scale, pioneer farmers of the '70s and '80s, who created the perception that produce could be exciting, and farmers markets came to be associated with freshness, with flavor, with a wholesomeness that seemed attractive compared with the supermarket choices of gas ripened tomatoes, immature fruit, and iceberg lettuce.

We should note that today's supermarket bears little resemblance to the supermarkets of the '60s. They have adapted, and in so doing, have incorporated many of the attributes of farmers markets. So all consumers are now beneficiaries of the innovations developed by California's small farmers.

Even so, farmers markets continue to grow in popularity for a variety of reasons, including the atmosphere. And absent this growth, small scale farming would be inconsequential in our agricultural landscape. So celebrate with us, in this season of abundant produce, the birth and growth of California's and the U.S.'s farmers markets.

P.S. Added Value Products

Our next issue of *Small Farm News* will be devoted to added value products. If you are involved with the production and marketing of added value products, we might list your farm and products in an added value directory we will be developing.



For more information, contact the Small Farm Center at (530) 752-8136, or e-mail: sfcenter@ucdavis.edu

Visit the Small Farm Center's online library at <http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/library> to order small farm publications on topics ranging from adzuki beans to agricultural legislation.

program news

Visitors

Members of the **Agricultural Development Project for India** visited with **Desmond Jolly** recently at the Small Farm Center. From various regions of India, members include **Paramajit Singh Bal**, farmer and managing partner of Nasirpur Farm Products; **Seema Bathla**, agricultural economist, Delhi University; **Shalini Kala**, program officer, World Food Program; **Parmod Kumar**, economist, National Council of Applied Economic Research; **Ashok Kundu**, senior research fellow, University of Kalyani; **Milind Murugkar**, assistant professor, K.K. Wagh College of Engineering; and **Saleem Sultan**, owner of Sultan Cold Storage, Uttar Pradesh.



The seven-member Agricultural Development Project for India visited the Small Farm Center this summer.

Welcome

Jan Mickler joins UC Cooperative Extension, Stanislaus County, as the new vegetable crops advisor. She recently completed her doctoral program in plant pathology at the University of California, Riverside, and brings a wealth of plant pathology experience to the vegetable crops industry in Stanislaus County.

UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Cruz County, welcomes new strawberry and caneberry advisor **Mark Bolda**, whose assignment also covers Monterey and San Benito counties. Bolda comes from private industry with six years' experience in berry research and production. He

holds a master's degree in plant protection and pest management from UC Davis.

Small Farm Program workgroup member **Paul Vossen**, a farm advisor with UC Cooperative Extension, Sonoma County, has returned from sabbatical leave in Cordoba, Spain, where he spent 10 months studying olive oil production, processing and evaluation. He

is developing three publications based on his research in Spain.

Grants

The **Small Farm Center** won a USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) Risk Management Grant for \$90,000 to develop a risk management education project.

Presentations

Small Farm Program director **Desmond Jolly**, farm advisor **Mark Gaskell**, UC Cooperative Extension, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties, and Small Farm Program workgroup member **Trevor Suslow**, extension specialist, presented workshops at the Third National Small Farm Conference September 17-20, 2002, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Small Farm Program farm advisor **Ramiro Lobo**, UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego County, attended the National Extension Tourism Conference September 16-19, 2002, in Traverse City, Michigan.



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The Small Farm Center links those who need information on small-scale farming with those who have the information. The Center produces publications and a newsletter; sponsors conferences and seminars; holds a library of periodicals, reports and books; gives referrals; and answers numerous requests for information.

Readers are encouraged to send us information, express views, and contact us for assistance. Mention of a specific product is intended for the reader's information or as an example of a similar product—not as a recommendation of that specific product.

Farmers Markets – FROM PAGE 1

While California has experienced tremendous growth in the direct marketing of farm products, the per farm figures for Rhode Island and Massachusetts point to even greater possibilities for direct marketing of California farm products.

Policy and Institutional Support

The bulk of the credit for farmers markets as a marketing innovation should accrue to those farmers and consumer advocates who initiated policy and institutional changes that opened the way. Legislative members in some cases had to bend the rules regarding areas such as standard packs, and we know how difficult it can be to turn the battleship even a few degrees. Nonetheless, in California and elsewhere, legislation gave legal status to farmers markets while codifying the terms and conditions for certification. These conditions include who can sell produce at a farmers market, and the prohibitions regarding resale of produce. More recently, certification has come to require inspections of production plots to certify that farmers actually grow or are capable of producing what they sell.

Early on, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) deployed a cadre of staff to provide technical assistance to beginning markets and to oversee market growth and performance. Fiscal constraints have reduced the ability of CDFA to offer the same level of technical assistance it earlier afforded, although it still maintains ultimate responsibility for administrative and legal enforcement of regulations. The CDFA delegates many enforcement responsibilities to the county based agricultural commissioners.

By the 1990s, the farmers market phenomenon was no longer regarded as a sideshow, an indulgence of elite food conscious yuppies. For thousands of family scale farmers, it had become the main event. USDA began to take notice of the existence of farmers markets and their contributions to farm income, and consumer demand for farm fresh foods and a 'high-touch' relationship to their food

sources. Former USDA Secretary Dan Glickman launched farmers markets outside the USDA building in Washington, and he and former Deputy Secretary Richard Rominger participated in many high profile publicity events to highlight and profile farmers markets and to move them more into the mainstream of the food marketing system.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service began to allocate more effort away from their traditional emphasis on brick and mortar markets and towards farmers markets. USDA sponsored farmers market conferences in various parts of the country, such as one in Santa Fe, New Mexico. USDA also cooperated with Cornell University in a project that used focus groups to identify issues and needs of farmers market stakeholders in 10 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. They also sponsored a session held in conjunction with the North American Farm Direct Marketing Association conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in January 2000.

USDA also has set up the Farmers Market Hotline with an 800 number (1-800-384-8704) that provides logistical information on markets, and has produced the National Directory of Farmers Markets in 1996 and 1998. The agency also has conducted periodic surveys of farmers markets, and is involved in a cooperative agreement with the UC Small Farm Center to produce a farmers market professional development training program.

Patronage of Markets

Customer demographics at farmers markets indicate a predominantly high income, highly educated, and not very ethnically diverse clientele. In his study of 21 farmers markets in San Diego County in 1998, Small Farm Program Farm Advisor Ramiro Lobo found the following with regards to customer demographic patterns: 76 percent were female; 88 percent were more than 36 years old; 56 percent had at least a four year college degree; 82 percent identified themselves as white; 24 percent earned less than

\$40,000; 30 percent earned between \$40,000 and \$60,000; 35 percent earned more than \$80,000; and 14 percent earned more than \$100,000.

Rutgers University extension specialist Ramu Govindasamy's 1998 New Jersey study found that 84 percent of farmers market consumers identified themselves as white; 88 percent were older than 36 years; and 54 percent were older than 51 years. Similarly to the Lobo San Diego study, the New Jersey study indicated that 83 percent were women, but 68 percent had no children living in the household. Regarding educational level, 62 percent had a college degree, and 55 percent had household incomes of more than \$60,000. Another 24 percent earned between \$40,000 and \$60,000, and 21 percent had incomes less than \$40,000.

In his 2000 national survey, Economist Tim Payne of the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service found that customers spent an average of \$17.30 per week in the national survey compared with \$19.25 in the San Diego survey and \$16 in the New Jersey survey. Payne notes that two-thirds of customers live within 10 miles of the market and are motivated to buy local products.

Impacts on Vendors

Govindasamy's study of producers at New Jersey's farmers markets was based on a relatively small sample of 36. Nonetheless, the results suggest the potential for enhancing sales of family farms. A reported 43 percent sold over \$100,000, and 39 percent sold less than \$15,000. Farmers utilized other marketing channels as well. For 40 percent of the farmers, sales from farmers markets provided 20 percent or less of their incomes; 30 percent earned from 25 – 40 percent of their income; and 34 percent (approximately one-third) from 50 – 100 percent of their income.

Growing Pains

As with organic foods, farmers markets have become a trendy, hip thing, and as with organic foods, the trendy, hip thing is fraught with potential problems.

Whereas the original motive for certified farmers markets was to enhance the performance of small farmer marketing by providing a direct avenue to consumers, motivations for starting a farmers market have become much more diverse.

For example, agencies involved in urban redevelopment see farmers markets as another tool to revitalize central cities; food security advocates see them as a method of providing low income households with access to farm-fresh, nutritious foods, and innovative entrepreneurs see these markets as a profit making opportunity, and some are not certified farmers markets. The blurring of purpose can lead to a disjunction between the welfare of farmers and the interests of the market's sponsors or operators. Even in the case of certified farmers markets, which predominate in California, there is evidence that the interests of market management and interests of small family scale farmers are not always in total alignment. Thus, a significant emerging challenge is the clarification of the purposes of farmers markets and the optimization of the interests of family scale farmers, consumers, communities and market management.

In his 2000 national survey, Payne found that 63 percent of farmers markets had vendor-operated boards of directors; 18 percent were operated by government organizations, and 42 percent were run by non-profits.

In another study by Govindasamy in New Jersey, 4 percent of a sample of 24 market managers or operators reported that they were self-employed, 37.5 percent were employed by a city, township or county; 29.2 percent were employed by markets, chambers of commerce or non-profits; and 29 percent were volunteers.

With this diversity in structure, purpose and governance, one would reasonably expect that the performance of markets would be quite variable. In the New Jersey study, 83 percent of managers who responded to the study had no farming experience. This might lead to the disjunction we alluded to earlier between the interests of management and the interest of farmers.

The Issue of Integrity

Farmers markets, particularly "certified" farmers markets, present a set of product attributes to customers that goes beyond the produce per se. Farmers markets purport to sell farm-direct products, with exceptions for some non-farm products allowed into the market. The data from consumer surveys indicates that consumers perceive the farm-direct products as denoting freshness and quality. Moreover, many consumers want to support family farmers.

But enforcement of this dictum of farm produced products sold by farmers is proving problematic, and the issue of market integrity has consumed substantial energy, and generated much anguish amongst market managers, farmers, vendors, agricultural commissioners

and CDFA. In California, farmers must have their production certified and should have a list of products on their certificate. They are allowed to sell products on behalf of one other certified producer. But there is much talk, if not documentation, of vendors reselling products not produced on their farms.

CDFA has proposed a schedule of penalties for various violations, with fines ranging from \$50 for minor infractions to \$1,000 for more serious ones. But the ability to enforce these regulations is in question. Agricultural commissioners, who comprise the second line of defense after market managers, have a substantial workload, and farmers markets are

only one component of their responsibilities. And an increased level of administrative fatigue appears to be emerging.

To the extent that farm-direct is a key attribute for consumers to patronize farmers markets, and to the extent that direct marketing is a key method of improving the performance of family scale farms, the issue of reselling is not trivial and continues to warrant concentrated attention. Given the administrative constraints deriving from budgetary and resource limits, markets will have to develop supplementary means of maintaining market integrity. This will require a more cohesive and coordinated strategy amongst the several hundred markets in California. The Southland Farmers Market Association's Code of Ethics provides a template for self-governance as a complement to the CDFA enforcement system. Southland's Value Statement also clearly outlines what consumers can expect and demand from their member markets, and in turn, what farmer-vendors and communities can expect from Southland markets.

Prospects

There clearly is a valued niche for farmers markets in the food distribution system, as indicated by the robust rate of growth during the past 20 years, and in the equally impressive geographic spread across the urban and rural landscape. Consumers identify farmers markets with a number of positive attributes. In fact, large numbers of supermarkets have developed produce merchandising systems that mimic, to the extent possible, farmers markets. But with growth comes challenges. The farmers market system has reached a level that demands higher levels of management, greater coordination and more effective governance. Some of the spontaneity may be lost in this process, but what may be gained is sustainability and high levels of customer satisfaction. One would have to judge the prospects for continued growth as bright, providing that the challenges are met in a timely, forthright manner. ■



A vendor rearranges fruit at a California farmers market.

Diverse – FROM PAGE 1

mendous support from the surrounding city organizations, government agencies, and local vendors who credit the market with reinvigorating the area.

Now 40 to 50 farmers pack the market during peak season. Shoppers can pick from a dazzling variety of offerings, from fresh rhubarb to flaming red tomatoes. “We try to break up commodities to create customer movement,” says Best.

As for finding new vendors, Dan Best says, “We’re into replacement mode, not recruitment mode.”

When a farmer leaves this market, Best turns to other farmers in the nine market Sacramento

Certified Farmers Market system that he manages to find the needed commodity. Before managing the market system, Best started out as one of its first farmers, selling corn, tomatoes, and bell peppers from his family’s farm in Lodi.

A Farmer’s Perspective

“I’ve got a loyal cult following,” says Tony Mora of Mora Family Farms in Denair, California. “It’s the people who really want good fruit,” explains Mora, who says his farmers market customers keep coming back even though “I’ve charged \$1.50 a pound for 10 years.”

Mora’s family grows 57 acres of peaches, plums and nectarines that they sell at 35 or 40 markets a week in the Bay Area and Sacramento regions. Gross sales fluctuate, says Mora. As for customer sales, at this market Mora says he has plenty of one-pound customers. “We’re hustling for a buck,” says Mora. “The lunch crowd ...want one peach for dessert.” His goal is to raise customer spending to \$3 each, and to that end, he’s planted 19 different stone fruit varieties.

“Variety is the key,” says Mora. “People buy more then.”

One of those people is Susan Rose, who walks to the market every Wednesday from her federal government job across the street. “I like to help out the small farmer, because I know how hard it is for them to make ends meet,” Rose says. “It’s well publicized how hard it is to keep the small farm alive these days.”

students trade them for a market token worth 25 cents. “Sometimes the little girls put their tokens together to buy flowers for their mom,” says Best.

This fall, Best launches a new program at Sacramento’s Cal Expo. Students visiting its demonstration farm will then tour the new Cal Expo Farmers Market. “They can see it in the field and on the table,” says Best



Market vegetables glow with health; Dan Best gets market help from his daughter Angela Allen; and Renae Best discusses mustard greens with a vendor.



Cameron Park Farmer’s Market

The Cameron Park Farmers Market in El Dorado County is only in its second year of existence, but has already gained a loyal group of

vendors and customers. Alauna Bray, who sold her famous garlic and heirloom Pomodoro tomatoes at other area markets for eight years, was determined to make the market a reality. Last year, she gathered a small group of growers to sell their produce at the market just weeks before it opened. Due to last year’s success, this year’s market boasts a variety of products, from seasonal farm produce and fresh cut flowers to organic olive oil and fresh baked bread.

“Selling at the market is the most wonderful thing I have ever done in my entire life,” says Bray. “It’s fun, and you get to know people.”

The Cameron Park location was chosen because the area, east of Sacramento, is growing so rapidly. Located on a parking lot between the grassy picnic area and children’s playground at Christa McAuliffe Park, the market is held on Wednesdays and Saturdays and provides an ideal location for family outings.

Unlike other area markets with long waiting lists, this market is looking for additional vendors for next year. While lo-

On-site Education Program

Before Renae Best started her farmers market education program, some of the children “didn’t even know what a peach was,” she says. Best and her husband Dan had managed farmers markets in Sacramento’s low income areas for years when she decided to develop an educational program to teach children about fresh fruits and vegetables.

Begun in 1996, her program links farmers markets with fourth grade students in Sacramento and Elk Grove schools. Area farmers markets serve as Best’s lively outdoor classroom. As many as three classes a day and 34 students at a time pour off the bus to start their lessons. After her introduction, Best sends them off with worksheets they must fill out “like a scavenger hunt. It’s all about the nutritional value of the food that’s in the market.”

The children also tally the number of farmers from each California county by reading the farm banners posted in each stall. When the worksheets are complete,

cal farmers have a good variety of high quality produce, the shorter growing season in El Dorado County prohibits them from providing a steady supply through the fall season. So the market has opened its space to outside vendors, and has a grower coming from Fresno and two families bringing Asian vegetables from Sacramento County.

"We will continue to expand and bring in vendors from outside of El Dorado County," says Donna Sauber, market treasurer. "Consumers want cherries all summer, when they are only ripe for a few weeks locally."

Customers also like the variety of products being brought in by the out-of-town growers. Market manager Alan Clarke says educating the consumer is something farmers markets do

well. In August, one of the vendors fried okra to demonstrate how it can be prepared without the so-called "sliminess" many people dislike. Growers also talk to their customers about how the produce is grown and harvested. Many growers also provide printed recipes for the less commonly known Asian vegetables.

Alauna Bray is already working on her list of vendors for next year's market. Interested farmers can reach her at (530) 676-3509.

Ferry Plaza Farmers Market

Twice a week along the San Francisco Bay, an unremarkable urban corner blossoms into a colorful market. Every Tuesday and Saturday, producers and vendors arrive, the white tents go up, and 5,000 to 8,000 shoppers sample, purchase, and eat their way through the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market.

This bustling market in downtown San Francisco, coordinated by the Center

for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA), opened on a Saturday in May 1993 and has been held ever since. Many of the farmers who squeaked through its first lean year, barely making enough money for gas, are still there today. Now they consider this their most successful market.

The Saturday Ferry Plaza Farmers Market brings 80 producers — farmers, fishermen and women, flower and plant growers, and cheese makers — and 20 vendors — bakers, local restaurants, a coffee cart, and chocolate makers — to-



Farmers market scenes include this green haired vendor, fresh rhubarb, and Tony Mora at his fruit stand.



gether on a parking lot at Embarcadero and Green.

"It's a delicate balance in the market. We try to make sure we have enough of everything, but not too much," said Tatiana Graf, CUESA's communications manager.

According to Steve Clemens, market manager, "The big things that people like about our market are the quality of the product, the mix of products, and the grower participation."

This informal educational exchange between growers and customers has been a signature of the Ferry Plaza Market, and part of what makes shoppers so dedicated to their favorite sellers.

Through the "Meet the Producer and Shop with the Chef" event, CUESA connects far-flung producers and urban chefs every Saturday from April to November. Sixty attentive shoppers sit around an outdoor kitchen to hear a producer describe how they grow or make the featured

item, and then watch a chef prepare it. After the cooking demonstration, the crowd samples the dish and gets a copy of the recipe.

These regular shoppers are the heart of the Ferry Plaza Market. Producers describe them as consistent, loyal, and very knowledgeable about food. They are the true San Francisco "foodies." Characterized by an appreciation for fresh, high-quality foods, gourmet dishes, and new flavors, foodies trek to the market in any weather — rain, shine, or fog — for their weekly purchases. And they turn out in

large numbers, pushing the market to near capacity.

"Right now, even if we had a marketing budget, we probably wouldn't want to use it because

it's so crowded already," says manager Clemens.

Despite the crowds, public transportation to the market is very limited. Since only one railcar stops nearby, an estimated 60 - 70 percent of shoppers drive there. This makes parking a hassle and severely limits the customer base.

In spring 2003, the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market will move three blocks down Embarcadero into the newly remodeled, historic Ferry Building. The Ferry Building has much better access to public transportation, which will make the market accessible to a much broader audience. ■

Article authors: Jamie Anderson, graduate assistant, and Gillian Brady, program representative, Small Farm Center, and Susan McCue, editor. Photography: Jamie Anderson and Susan McCue.

publications

resources



web sites

Controlling the Chaos: Suggested Guidelines for Implementation and Management of a Retail Farmers Market provides detailed information from the Economics Institute at Loyola University New Orleans, the organization that runs the city's Crescent City Farmers Market. Cost: \$30 plus shipping and handling. Contact: Loyola Twomey Center, 7214 St. Charles Ave., Box 907, New Orleans, LA 70118; Crescent City Farmers Market: (504) 861-5898, or online at <http://www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.com/markets/merchandise.php>.

Starting and Strengthening Farmers' Markets in Pennsylvania, Second Edition is a straightforward guide that provides tips on launching a market and maintaining it with organizational and marketing tools. Cost: Free. Contact: The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 200 North Third Street, Suite 600, Harrisburg, PA 17101; (717) 787-9555.

Farmers Markets: Consumer Trends, Preferences and Characteristics is produced by Rutgers University in New Jersey and focuses on the state's farmers markets. The 38-page report includes demographics, consumption trends of fresh fruits and vegetables, preferences for organic produce, and amount spent per visit. Cost: Download is free from <http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~agecon/agmkt.htm>. Contact: Ramu Govindasamy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 55 Dudley Rd., New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8520; (732) 932-9171 ext. 25.

Other related resources at this Rutgers web site include **Farmers' Markets: Managers Characteristics and Factors Affecting Market Organization**, and **Farmers' Markets: Producers' Characteristics and Status of Their Business**.

Farmers Markets and Rural Economic Development: Entrepreneurship, Small Business Incubation and Job Creation in the Rural Northeast provides insights for farmers market sponsors, extension staff and economic development officials about how farmers markets contribute to local economic development. Cost: \$4.25. Contact: Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; (607) 255-9832; http://www.cals.cornell.edu/agfoodcommunity/afs_ld.cfm

U.S. Farmers Markets 2000: A Study of Emerging Trends provides detailed 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.htm>. Contact: Velma Lakins, Marketing Services Branch, USDA, Room 2644 South, 1400 Independence Ave. S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250-0269; no phone number available; fax number: (202) 690-0031; or web site above.

Trends in Agricultural Land and Lease Values for 2002 is a report published by the California Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers. The report shows that California's Central Coast land values have remained largely the same since the year 2000. For report details, visit the society's web site at <http://www.asfmra.org/fsitemap.htm>

NEW FARMERS MARKET RESOURCES

Forthcoming UC Small Farm Center/USDA farmers market publications include **Starting a Farmers Market**; **Farmers Market Management: Management Skills for Farmers Market Managers**; and **Growing Your Market**. Publication is expected in early 2003. For details or to be added to the waiting list, contact the Small Farm Center at (530) 752-8136 or e-mail: sfcenter@ucdavis.edu.

California Department of Food and Agriculture-Regulations
<http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/cdfa/pendingregs/>

California Electronic Benefit Transfer Program
<http://www.ebtproject.ca.gov/>

California Federation of Certified Farmers' Markets
<http://farmersmarket.ucdavis.edu/>

California Farm Conference
<http://www.californiafarmconference.com/>

Certified Farmers' Markets of Sacramento
<http://www.california-grown.com/>

Ferry Plaza Farmers Markets
<http://www.ferryplazafarmersmarket.com/>

Santa Monica Farmers Markets
<http://www.farmersmarket.santa-monica.org/>

Small Farm Center Farmers Market Links
<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/docs/farmmk.html>

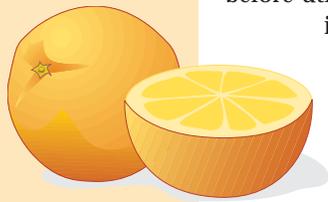
Southland Farmers Market Association
<http://www.sfma.net>

Stockton Certified Farmers Markets
<http://www.stocktonfarmersmarket.org>

USDA Electronic Benefit Transfer
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/menu/admin/ebt/ebt.htm>

USDA Farmers Markets
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/index.htm>

food safety



Food Safety: Sampling Guidelines

Reprinted with permission of Southland Farmers Market Association

Produce can be cleaned in two ways:

- You can wash your produce before coming to the market.
- You can wash your produce at the market in a regular sink (but not in a restroom sink), in a temporary sink set up at markets, or you can clean your produce by immersing your products completely under water in a bucket provided by the market.

Hands can be cleaned at three places:

- A regular toilet sink with a single-service (liquid) soap and single-service (paper) towels.
- A gravity fed-system (water must drain down a tub) where water runs over your hands, supplied with single-service soap and towels.
- A gravity-fed system with single-service soap and towels at your own vehicle.

Utensils must be cleaned with one of three acceptable sanitizer solutions.

The following recipes are good for four hours at your own sink, or two hours at a centralized market set-up. Iodine is good for four hours in either set-up.

- 100 ppm chlorine: 1/2 ounce per gallon of water (1/2 ounce = one tablespoon) OR two capfuls of bleach from a quart bleach bottle.
- 200 ppm quaternary ammonium: 1/2 ounce per gallon of water.
- 25 ppm iodine: 1/2 ounce per 2.5 gallons of water.

Knives should be stored in a sanitizer solution when not in use. Cutting boards and other items used in sampling (containers) must be sanitized and air-dried before utilized. Sanitizer solution can be applied by immersion or with a spray bottle. All utensils should be food grade (approved for food contact), non-absorbent (plastic not wood), and in good repair. Sanitizing can be done at your own set-up or at a centralized market set-up.

Waste can be handled in the following approved ways:

Liquid waste, including ice, must be dumped into the normal sewer system – not in the street or on plants. Only water used to keep flowers fresh can be dumped on landscaping (with the market's permission).

Liquid waste can be picked up by a licensed waste removal company. Farms can take their waste (solid and liquid) back to their farms. All market solid waste

must be stored in water-tight containers (closed trash bags) and disposed of in acceptable garbage bins.

Samples must be delivered to the customer in an acceptable manner:

Plastic gloves are required, but there is no substitute for hand washing. Prepared samples must be protected from droplet contamination, insects, dust, and a customer coming in contact with more than one sample.

Seven methods to distribute samples have been approved for use at certified farmers markets. Other methods are possible. Use this as a guideline if you have an item that does not exactly fit one of the following methods:

- Capped squeeze bottle for items such as honey. Bottle is uncapped and product is squeezed onto a disposable stick. Bottle is re-capped. Stick is discarded.
- Modified shaker bottle for items such as nuts or grapes. The opening of a squeeze bottle is enlarged to shake out a limited number of items per shake into the customer's hand.
- Bulk liquid container for items such as juice. Dispensed with a down-facing, self-closing spout into a disposable cup given to a customer by a farmer. Containers must be washed in an approved kitchen.
- Small sample cup of items such as sprouts or jams. Disposable cups can be filled in an approved facility or in a manner for individual distribution to a customer.
- Covered serving dish for products such as sprout mixes, jellies, and jams. Serving dish should have a hinged lid that opens on the grower's side of the table. Grower lifts lid, uses a disposable spoon to scoop out a sample portion. Spoon is given to the customer.
- Sliced produce can be carried in washable containers with lids, and dispensed by grower with toothpicks.
- Sneeze guards can be used for products with an open display (like a salad bar). Guards must be of sufficient size to intercept fluids and contaminants from the public.

news notes



Low-income pregnant women and mothers eat more fresh fruits and vegetables when they are allowed to use WIC coupons to shop at farmers' markets. That was a conclusion of a survey of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) participants by University of California researchers. WIC coupons are used in addition to food stamps to purchase special foods for pregnant or breast-feeding women enrolled in WIC. The survey was conducted to evaluate the U.S. Department of Agriculture's WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which was established in 1992 to encourage the women and their children to consume a more healthful diet. The survey showed that 85 percent of the California participants ate more fresh fruits and vegetables as a result of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. The program also spurred the first visit to a farmers' market for 85 percent of the women.

Farmers markets continue to be a vital sales outlet for farmers nationwide. Results from the 2000 USDA Farmers Market Study indicate that 19,000 farmers reported selling their produce at farmers markets exclusively. Also, according to the 2000 National Farmers Market Directory, there are more than 2,800 farmers markets operating in the U.S. Of these markets, 82 percent are self-sustaining, and 52 percent participate in WIC, food stamp, and local and/or state nutrition programs. In addition, 25 percent of the nation's farmers markets are involved in gleaning programs that distribute food to needy families.

USDA is launching the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Pilot Program to provide fresh food to low-income seniors from farmers markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture. For more information, call the USDA's Farmers Market Hotline at 1 (800) 384-8704 or visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/facts.htm>.

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) is a permanent change in the way food stamps and other social services will be delivered in California. The 1996 federal welfare reform law mandated that states replace paper food stamp coupons with plastic Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. Like debit or ATM cards, EBT cards are secured with a personal identification number and can be used to make in-store purchases.

San Bernardino and San Diego counties began distributing benefits via EBT cards in 1997, and Yolo and Alameda counties started in August 2002. By the end of 2004, all counties in California will use EBT to distribute food stamps and, if they choose,

cash benefits (CalWorks, General Assistance, Refugee Cash Assistance, and the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants) as well. For the date of EBT implementation in your county, check the state's County Implementation Schedule at http://www.ebtproject.ca.gov/County_implementation_sched.htm.

The transition to EBT cards has been a concern to farmer's market managers, vendors, and shoppers who use food stamps. To make market purchases compatible with the new EBT system, the state has offered two alternatives. First, the state will provide certified farmer's markets that receive more than \$200 in food stamps per month a Point of Sale (POS) device for EBT transactions at no cost.

Using the POS machine, market shoppers will deduct an amount from their EBT card and receive the equivalent in the market's own scrip, or currency, to make their purchases. At the end of the market, vendors will exchange this scrip for cash, as they have with paper food coupons. Second, growers at designated certified farmer's markets are encouraged by the state to purchase their own POS devices.

Given that POS devices are expensive and that handling electronic purchases at each farm stand would slow the pace of transactions, farmers and market managers have been more enthusiastic about the first approach. Penny Leff, Berkeley Farmers' Markets manager, reports that their markets will use a POS device and issue 50-cent "wooden nickles" as scrip for EBT transactions. While they wait for their POS device, they use phone-in authorization to make EBT transactions.

Early feedback on the transition to EBT in Berkeley has been positive overall, but customers report that the 50-cent nickles are a handful and make transactions over a few dollars cumbersome. Leff is working toward authorization to produce \$1 and \$2 scrip as well. Typically, the Tuesday and Saturday Berkeley Markets accept a total of \$500 to \$1,000 in food stamps every month.

For more information about EBT:

California Electronic Benefit Transfer Program
<http://www.ebtproject.ca.gov>

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>

calendar

OCTOBER

10

IPM Strategies

Watsonville, CA

Hosted by UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Cruz County, this workshop covers innovations, pesticide resistance management, and monitoring.

Contact: Steve Tjosvold, UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Cruz County, (831) 763-8040; e-mail: satjosvold@ucdavis.edu

23-26

On the Road to Sustainable Agriculture

A National Conference from a Southern Perspective

Raleigh-Durham, NC

This on the road conference features two days of tours covering themes such as urban sprawl; sustainable agriculture; organic research, marketing, and certification; direct marketing; production systems; and opportunities for limited-resource farmers.

Contact: Gwen Roland, University of Georgia, Agricultural Experiment Station, Griffin, GA 30223-1797, (770) 412-4786, e-mail: groland@peachnet.edu

NOVEMBER

7-9

Conference on Ecolables and the Greening of the Food Market

Boston, MA

Sponsored by Tufts University, sessions cover ecolabel descriptions, research, issues, and controversies.

Contact: Willie Lockeretz, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155, (617) 627-5264; e-mail: willie.lockeretz@tufts.edu

12-15

Almond Production: A Pomology Short Course

Davis, CA

Presentations by UC faculty and farm advisors cover almond production and related fundamental principles.

Contact: Karen Price, University Extension, UC Davis, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616, (530) 757-8899, e-mail: kprice@unexmail.ucdavis.edu

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Floriculture and Nursery Marketing

Watsonville, CA

Hosted by UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Cruz County, this workshop presents new opportunities in this industry for growers.

Contact: Steve Tjosvold, UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Cruz County, (831) 763-8040; e-mail: satjosvold@ucdavis.edu

17-19

California Small Farm Conference

Ventura, CA

Cosponsored by the UC Small Farm Center, the conference features short courses, workshops, farm tours, and a tasting reception.

Topics presented include soil science, direct marketing, value-added production, specialty animal enterprises, farm management, specialty crops, organic and low-input production, and agricultural policy issues.

Contact: California Farm Conference, P.O. Box 73614, Davis, CA 95617, (530) 756-8518, ext. 16; e-mail: info@californiafarmconference.com

DECEMBER

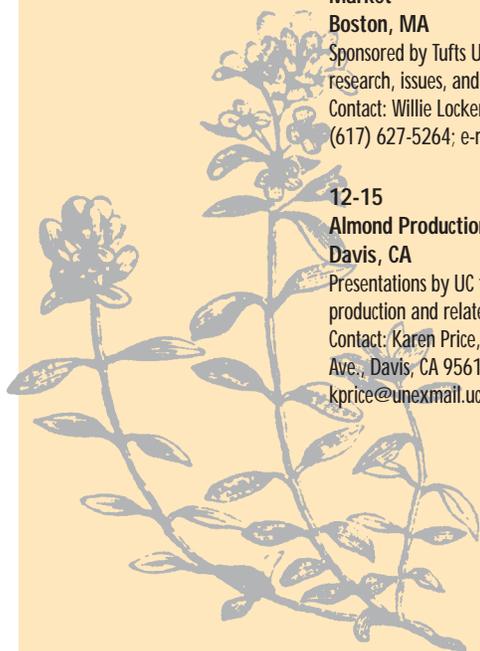
3

Agricultural and Nature Tourism

UC Davis

This one day workshop covers all aspects of setting up a new agritourism or nature tourism venture in California, and includes the new state manual with step by step instructions.

Contact: Birgit Hempel, Small Farm Center, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616; (530) 752-8136, e-mail: sfcenter@ucdavis.edu



Add your event to our online calendar at <http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/calendar>

California Farm Conference



November 17-19, 2002 • Ventura, California

Workshop Tracks

- Farm management
- Specialty products
- Production and food systems
- Linking farms to communities
- Innovative marketing
- Agricultural policy and specialty issues
- Organic, low-input and experimental crop production

Short Courses

- Adding Value to Farm and Natural Resource Products
- New Ideas for Direct Marketing of Farm Produce
- Drip Irrigation Design and Maintenance
- Specialty Animal Enterprises

Tours

- On-farm soil conservation practices
- Specialty regional perennial crops
- Ojai Farmers Market

Farm Conference Short Course

Adding Value to Farm and Natural Resource Products: A Short Course on Getting Started or Expanding Your Business

Sunday, November 17, 2002

This intensive short course provides useful information on the process of starting up or expanding your value-added production, and includes information on:

- product development
- consumer and market research
- liability
- food safety
- marketing

Presenters: Farmers and other entrepreneurs involved in value-added production, and University of California professionals: Desmond Jolly, agricultural economist; Linda Harris, microbiologist; and Shermain Hardesty, agricultural economist.

Sponsored by: UC Small Farm Center, UC Center for Cooperatives, and the UC Davis Department of Food Science and Technology.

To Register: Call California Small Farm Conference: (530) 756-8518 Ext. 16.

For details, visit
<http://www.californiafarmconference.com>



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