

ers band together to open specialty markets, such as restaurants, organic stores, consumer co-ops and specialty food stores (see Figure 8).

Research by the Community, Food and Agriculture Program indicates that many small-scale fruit and vegetable cooperatives play an important part in sustaining their members' farm businesses. However, smaller co-ops tend to be fragile enterprises, and many teeter on the brink of financial failure. Maintaining member loyalty, retaining qualified managers, and endeavoring to be the "supplier of choice" are often significant challenges.

Cornell University's Community, Food and Agriculture Program is working with the New England Small Farm Institute, the Cooperative Development Institute, and with co-ops throughout the Northeast to establish a regional organization—the Northeast Federation of Family Farm Cooperatives (NeFFFCo)—to support the development of small-scale farmer cooperatives. Communities can also implement several strategies to support cooperative development:

- Educating producers about cooperative marketing opportunities and the process of organizing a co-op.
- Hosting co-op feasibility discussion meetings; helping to develop a business plan for the co-op.
- Assisting with financing: A number of loan and grant programs are available from the USDA's Rural Business Cooperative Service, but filling out the paperwork can be a daunting task for growers or co-op management (see Financing Agriculture Development, page 93).
- Teaching about the benefits of cooperation among youth in 4-H and Future Farmers of America programs.

Figure 9. Top ten challenges of small-scale fruit and vegetable cooperatives

Northeast small-scale co-op managers identified the following as their top ten challenges:

1. Having a succession plan (that is, a plan to replace themselves without disruption).
2. Becoming the supplier of choice for buyers.
3. Competitive wage and benefits package for employees.
4. Maintaining consistent volume of product.
5. Delivering consistent quality.
6. Retaining qualified management.
7. Maintaining product quality.
8. Having a succession plan for leaders (e.g., for board members).
9. Achieving efficient distribution.
10. Providing sufficient capital.

This information is based on a survey of 28 fruit and vegetable grower co-op managers in the Northeast, conducted by CFAP in 2000. Contact Duncan Hilchey for information on a forthcoming publication, including complete results of the study, at dlh3@cornell.edu.

References and Resources for Cooperative Marketing

Collaborative Marketing Groups (CMGs) in Minnesota: Web site www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/businessmanagement/components/7539_c_1.html.

Cooperating for Sustainability: Achieving a Sustainable Agriculture through Cooperation. April 2, 1997, teleconference at Cornell University.

Cornell Cooperative Enterprise Program: Web site aem.cornell.edu/special_programs/cooperatives/index.html.

Henehan, Brian. *Considering Cooperation: A Guide for New Cooperative Development*. Extension Bulletin, Department of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Extension Bulletin 2001-01.

Hilchey, Duncan, Gilbert Gillespie and Kathy Ruhf. Forthcoming. *Small-Scale Cooperatives in the Northeast*. USDA Rural Enterprise Cooperative Service Bulletin. For information contact Duncan Hilchey at dlh3@cornell.edu.

Northeast Federation of Family Farm Cooperatives (NeFFFCo): contact Gretchen Gilbert, CFAP, 216 Warren Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. 14853; (607) 255-9832; e-mail gcg4@cornell.edu.

University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives: www.wisc.edu/uwcc.

USDA, Rural Business Cooperative Service: Web site www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/csdir.htm.

New Generation Cooperatives	Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding
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An exciting twist in farmer co-ops emerged in the last 10 years. With the hope of garnering profit further up the supply chain, farmers have organized an estimated 200 “new generation co-ops” to add value to their commodities. These co-ops represent the latest innovation in American farmers’ struggle to achieve as a group what they are not able to achieve as individuals in the marketplace.

“New generation co-ops” are the latest innovation by farmers to achieve as a group what they are not able to achieve as individuals.

Mountain View Harvest (MVH), headquartered in Aurora, Colorado, is a wheat growers’ cooperative that mills its own wheat flour and bakes specialty breads for the restaurant trade. It began with a feasibility study and business planning activities funded by

USDA Rural Development. The feasibility study, which was conducted by a consulting firm, suggested that “par baking” bread was a profitable adding-value activity. The process involves baking bread to within 10 percent of completion and then flash-freezing and shipping it. Restaurants and in-store bakeries finish baking the product. Restaurants like it because they are able to serve fresh-baked bread products quickly and without all the processing activities.

In addition to their value-adding activities, another feature of new generation co-ops that distinguishes them from traditional co-ops is the ownership structure and degree of commitment and control that farmer-owners have. Typically new generation co-ops, also called “closed co-ops,” have a limited number of farmer-members. Each member must make a substantial equity investment to raise the capital required for the co-op’s start-up, and a major equity drive is usually part of the organizing and recruiting process. The stakes are high for joining a new generation co-op, and the financial investment that farmers make reflects a high degree of loyalty and commitment to the co-op.

New generation co-ops have typically been organized by farmers themselves. However, communities, organizations and agencies can play many supportive roles. Some co-ops have issued stock to members of their host community, which gives local residents a stake in the fortunes of the co-op, and allows them to help shape its development (Zeuli *et al.*, 1998).

Care should be taken to weigh the environmental and social impacts of the processing activities and facilities associated with any new generation cooperative. At least one study suggests that increases in water usage, traffic and transient labor may pose problems for a small community that is not prepared for these impacts.

New gen co-op trend to watch

Several large new generation cooperatives, including **Mountain View Harvest**, have recently decided to convert their legal structure to C-corporations in order to more effectively generate investment capital and finance expansion. The rationale behind these conversions is that having a “closed co-op” limits growth because farmer-members do not have the resources to self-finance, and that conversion to a corporation is a natural evolutionary step to stay competitive in the global food and agriculture system.

It is too early to assess how these conversions may affect the thinking of other new or existing NGCs, but observers are watching intently to see what, if any, vestiges of the old cooperative carry forward into the new corporate culture—especially how farmers will be treated.

References and Resources for New Generation Cooperatives

Merrett, C.D. and Norman Walzer, eds. 2001. *A Cooperative Approach to Local Economic Development*. Westport, Conn.: Quorum Books.

University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives: www.wisc.edu/uwcc.

Zeuli, K., G.A. Goreham, R. King and E. van der Sluis. March 1998. *Dakota Growers Pasta Company and the City of Carrington, North Dakota: A Case Study*, USDA Fund for Rural America. Report available at www.wisc.edu/uwcc/info/fra/carr.html.

Marketing and Trading Clubs	Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding
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Marketing and trading clubs are small-group, farmer-to-farmer organizations in which members share marketing information and in some cases experiment with investments such as commodity futures contracts (see page 82 for other examples of farmer-to-farmer programs). There are perhaps more than 100 marketing and trading clubs across the country; North Dakota alone has nearly 50. In New York a number of marketing clubs have been formed, often with the support of a Cornell Cooperative Extension agent or local agribusiness. Marketing and trading clubs typically have 10 to 20 members.

Though administrative support may come from non-farmers, the farmers themselves take on the leadership role, choosing when and where to meet and

The farmers take on the leadership role, choosing the topics of discussion.

what the topics of discussion will be. Meetings can take place on farms, at schools, Cooperative Extension offices, or other public places. The formality of a marketing club depends on its purpose. Club members in the

Figure 10. Key factors for a successful marketing club

The following list is based on the experience of the Montana Grain Growers Association. This appears to be good advice regardless of whether the group is making investments.

1. Commitment to success.
2. A good leader.
3. A good facilitator.
4. Developing clear and concise bylaws.
5. Group trading in a controlled and applicable manner.
6. Reliable and conscientious treasurer.
7. A quality educational program.
8. Regular meetings.
9. Group flexibility.

Source: *Marketing Club Leader Resource Notebook*, Montana Grain Growers Association.

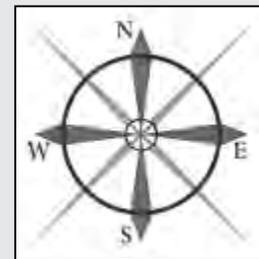
grain and livestock businesses typically pay an annual fee of \$25 to \$200, which the group then invests in the commodity markets. These members learn risk management through their experience as an investment group. Because of potential risks and legalities, formal incorporation of the club might be necessary. In Iowa, this type of marketing club is called a “trading club.”

Other marketing clubs serve an educational function only, and do not need to be incorporated. In these clubs, members can work on and critique one another’s business plans, marketing strategies and insurance policies, take field trips, or host a guest speaker. A more formal structure might be necessary if they choose to cooperatively market products, purchase inputs as a group, or conduct other business activities.



Resource tip for Marketing Clubs

How to Organize Marketing Clubs: five on-line publications from the National Ag Risk Education Library at the Center for Farm Fiscal Management, www.agrisk.umn.edu (click on “Ag Risk Library” and scroll down to “Marketing Clubs.”)



Experience with Dairy Marketing Clubs

Cropp, Bob. 1999. University of Wisconsin-Madison Cooperative Extension. Five-page factsheet.

Organizing a Marketing Club

Smith, Jackie, Mark Waller, Carl Anderson and William Tierney. May 1998. Texas Agricultural Extension Service. Four-page factsheet, including curriculum.

Organizing a Marketing Club (Curriculum Guide)

Texas Agricultural Extension Service, April 1998, Media Type: curriculum, (8 pages).

A Cookbook for Organizing a Marketing Club

Texas Agricultural Extension Service. Factsheet.

Marketing Clubs: An Educational Tool

Ward, Clement E. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Four-page factsheet.

References and Resources for Marketing Clubs

Marketing Club Leader Resource Notebook, Montana Grain Growers Association, Great Falls, MT 59403; (406) 761-4596; Web site www.montanamarketmanager.org.

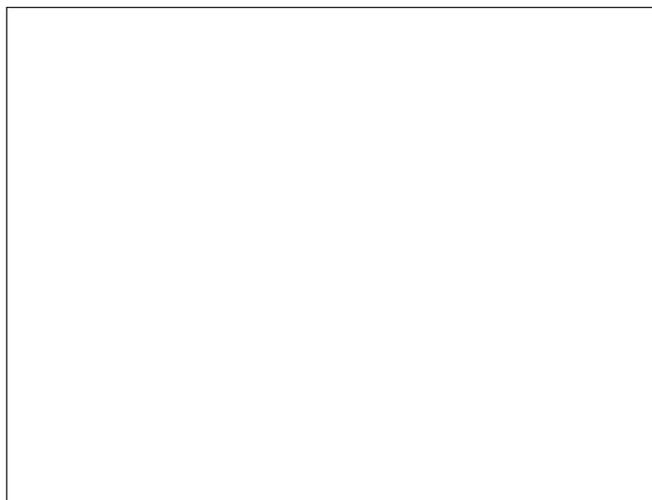
Texas Cooperative Extension Master Marketer Program. Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University, 2124 TAMU/College Station, TX 77843-2124; (979) 845-1751; Web site mastermarketer.tamu.edu.

Cooperative Farm Stores

Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding

Imagine walking into a small grocery store where everything on the shelves was made by local farmers and food producers...eggs, milk, meats, sausages, fruits and vegetables, preserves, wines, cheeses, juices, flours, flowers, and baked goods...all fresh, or processed locally.

In the 1940s and '50s the Grange League Federation (GLF) in New York operated "Producer and Consumer" cooperative stores, which later became the Syracuse, N.Y.-based regional supermarket chain P&C. In the early days, the mission of these cooperative stores was to bring consumers and producers together in a mutually beneficial relationship. The stores, which eventually numbered in the twenties, even offered cold storage space for customers. However, the post-World War II demand for an ever-growing variety of products eventually led the stores to carry more than the maximum 51 percent of non-farmer-member's products allowed on their shelves. At this point, in the 1950s, the cooperative store chain had to restructure as a private corporation.



The first P&C Cooperative Family Foods store, Batavia, New York.

While the old P&C cooperative stores are gone, Europeans have recently developed a similar concept. In France, for example, farmers have organized networks of cooperatively owned and operated farm stores, which retail the finest and freshest products from the area's farmers.

Typically ten farmers own a store, each specializing in one product area, including dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt), beef, pork and lamb products, poultry, fresh seasonal and canned fruits and vegetables, root and storage crops, mushrooms, dried beans and other legumes, wines and liquors, fresh baked goods and sweets, and condiments such as sauces, syrups, jellies and preserves.

While the stores do have employees to stock, clean and ring up sales, a farmer is always on hand to answer customer questions. Education of consumers is an important facet of their marketing strategy. The farmers emphasize the importance of freshness, the ecological aspects of their farming practices, and the critical role agriculture

plays in sustaining the culture of rural France. These stores seem to work both in inner cities as well as on the periphery of urban areas.

The cooperative farm store concept might be ready for a comeback in the U.S. Communities interested in the idea should help local farmers conduct a thorough feasibility study.

References and Resources for Cooperative Farm Stores

Cooperatives: A Tool For Community Economic Development, a cooperative development manual. University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, 230 Taylor Hall, 427 Lorch Street, Madison, WI 53706-1503; (608) 262-3981; Web site www.wisc.edu/uwcc/manual/cover.html.

Duncan Hilchey, Community, Food and Agriculture Program; e-mail dlh3@cornell.edu.

Why customers like stores run by farmers

Farm managers who operate retail outlets say farm-owned stores are a big hit for a number of reasons:

- Prices are competitive compared to commercial grocery stores.
- Homemade products and farm freshness are appealing to customers looking for natural produce.
- People in the community trust their farmers.
- Small stores take more care. For example, Ontario Farm Manager Corry Martens has beef aged 20 days, making it much more tender than grocery-store meat.
- Small community stores are also social meeting places where neighbors can get to know each other.
- People like to support local businesses.

Source: *Canadian Farm Manager*, January, 2000; www.cfbmc.com/cfm-eng/jan2000.

Institutional Food Service and Farm-to-School Programs

Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding

Where does your local school district get its food? Why couldn't some of this food come from local farmers or processors? Motivated by a growing concern about children's health, the quality of school lunches, and the viability of local agriculture, a growing number of communities around the country are taking steps to link area farmers with local school cafeterias. Other public institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, summer camps and prisons offer additional institutional markets.

In public-school cafeterias, change can be difficult for menu planners and nutritionists who must make do with USDA surplus commodities and limited budgets. Even so, intrepid pioneers in many school districts around the country are developing successful farm-to-school programs. For example, in the Johnson City School District in

Broome County, New York, School Food Service Director Ray Denniston has made buying from local or New York state farmers a priority.

Denniston is part of a team of New York food service industry leaders working with Jennifer Wilkins of Cornell University's Division of Nutritional Sciences on a USDA-funded project to explore opportunities for increasing the use of quality, nutritious, local foods in schools. National in scope, the program—entitled “From Farm to School: Improving Small Farm Viability and School Meals”—is establishing a range of models to increase the overall number of institutions purchasing local foods and the volume of their purchases.

Communities can nurture the relationship between schools and farmers by organizing local farm-to-school programs; enacting local ordinances or reducing red tape to facilitate local purchasing; and building agriculture and nutrition issues into the school curriculum. Other institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, university food services and prisons, offer additional marketing and educational opportunities.



The New North Florida Cooperative is doing the processing and marketing of these collard greens, which will be washed, chopped and packaged before being shipped to 30 schools in north-west Florida.

Photo: Dorothy Staley, USDA.

References and Resources for Institutional Food Service and Farm-to-School Programs

Azuma, Andrea Misako and Andrew Fisher. 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; (310) 822-5410; Web site www.foodsecurity.org.

Schofer, Daniel P., et al. February 2000. *Innovative Marketing Opportunities for Small Farmers: Local Schools as Customers*. USDA Agriculture Marketing Service.

Strohbehn, Catherine A. June 2000. *Local Food Connections: From Farms to Schools*. Iowa State University Extension, (515) 232-5649.

KargField, Pamela J. A sea of greens: Low-income farmers use vegetable processing, marketing co-op to create new opportunity in north Florida. *Rural Cooperative Magazine*, July/August 1999.

USDA 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*. 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302; (703) 305-2000.

Wilkins, Jennifer. *From Farm to School: Improving Small Farm Viability and School Meals*. Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; (607) 255-2730.

Tips for tapping institutional markets

The 1999 North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Conference *Alternative Agricultural Marketing: Developing Skills for the New Millennium*, included a workshop entitled “Tapping into Institutional Markets.” Larry Jacobsen, purchasing manager of Allen Memorial Hospital in Waterloo, Iowa, explained the mindset of institutional buyers and how to access institutional markets (www.attra.org/attra-pub/altmeat.html). Jacobsen found that buying local products did not increase the hospital’s overall costs, and that patient reaction was extremely favorable. The following are his suggestions for tapping institutional markets:

- Explore vendor arrangements and current long-term contracts with food suppliers.
- Offer consistent pricing, quality and supply volume. It is a myth that institutions will accept lower quality. Prices may be slightly higher than food service suppliers, but the buyer must see the value added to them in buying from a local supplier.
- Where appropriate, emphasize the added value of local products. For example, grass-fed meats may have lower fat, and contain elevated levels of CLA, both of which have been shown (in animal experiments) to have *potential* health benefits for humans.
- Give buyers VIP tours of farm and processing facilities.
- Take time, dedication and patience. Try to find a “champion” within the administration—someone who is likely to be around for some time in the future.
- Give free samples.
- Offer convenience and one-stop shopping.
- Educational institutions tend to have more bureaucracy, while hospitals, prisons, respite programs, convalescent homes, etc., may have more autonomy and flexibility.
- A growing challenge is that more institutions are contracting out their food services to non-local chain operations, including fast-food businesses with no flexibility to buy fresh, local food.
- Be sure to have producers ship their animals to USDA-inspected packers.
- Vacuum-packed fresh meats are desirable, as are precut, frozen and even precooked products, since many kitchen managers seek to reduce time, cost and liability of processing food before cooking.

Larry Jacobsen can be reached at the Allen Memorial Hospital at (319) 235-3670 or at home at (319) 234-2434; e-mail albort00@aol.com.

Connecting with Ethnic Communities

Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding

Recent immigrants from all over the world make up an increasing portion of the population in many U.S. communities, rural and urban. These are often close-knit communities with strong ties to the homeland and a distinct ethnic culture. Food is an integral part of that culture, and food businesses like restaurants and retail grocery stores are an important part of the community economy. In New York City for example, there is a growing demand for Caribbean and Asian foods, including specialty fruits, vegetables, herbs, dairy products, and live poultry, goats

Food is an integral part of ethnic culture.

and lambs. Prices tend to be inelastic in middle- and lower-income neighborhoods. However, middle- and upper-income classes are steadily growing and will ultimately demand higher-value products, creating more opportunities for farmers in the future.

Any ethnic cuisine will include a variety of products that may be produced profitably by farmers within the region. But all too often, local farmers are unaware of these opportunities. Consequently a growing number of recent immigrants are going into farming for themselves, in order to serve their own community's culinary needs. The New Farmer Development Program, a joint effort of New York City Greenmarket and Cornell Cooperative Extension of New York City, is one of a handful of pioneering efforts to recruit and train immigrant farmers, and help them get access to land and get started in commercial farming.

Figure 10. Top immigrant groups in New York City, 1990–1994

Group	# Immigrants
Dominican Republic	110,140
Other Caribbean/West Indian	94,517
Former Soviet Union and Poland	85,838
Central and South American	37,746
India, Pakistan, Bangladesh	31,507
China, Korea, Philippines	85,802
England, Ireland	18,338
Israel	4,827

A sampling of New York City's ethnic food system

New York City probably has the most complex and culturally diverse food system in the world. Here are some examples of marketing opportunities:

- 5,000 bodegas (Latino convenience stores)
- 850 Korean green grocers
- 81 live animal markets (poultry, rabbits, lambs, goats)
- 200 kosher restaurants

Sources: New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, www.jewishlink.com; Sarah Kershaw, *New York Times*, "Union Drive Collides With Korean Grocers," February 15, 2001.

Farmers may need help in bridging the gap between cultures.

Farmers who are not a part of the ethnic community they would like to serve need especially good people skills—and sometimes some help—to bridge the gap between cultures. Communities interested in helping local farmers tap into ethnic markets may be able to identify

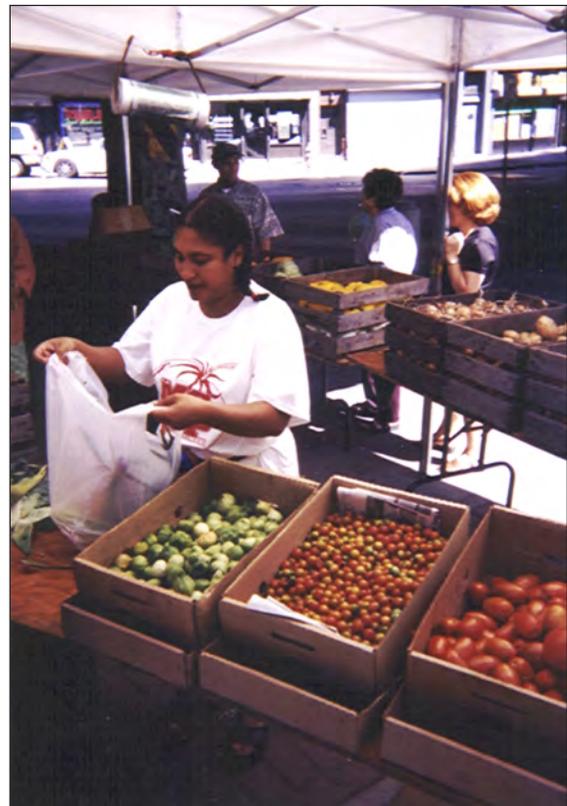
collaborating organizations within ethnic neighborhoods. These neighborhood groups can, in turn, organize consumers, provide lists of products they are looking for, and help make contacts with restaurants and other wholesale buyers. Working through local ethnic community organizations helps to build trust and credibility. Familiarity with the language, culture and ethnic culinary traditions is also important.

Farmers who want to serve ethnic communities should first consider direct-marketing strategies. Farmers' markets, CSAs, and direct wholesaling to independent ethnic grocery stores are plausible options. Large-scale wholesale produce marketing firms exist in many urban ethnic communities; however, they operate on very thin margins and usually have unfavorable price and volume requirements.

Case Study: Onion Grower Sells to Hispanics in New York City

Cornell University teamed up with several community-based groups in New York City during the summer of 1999 to experiment with links between growers and ethnic neighborhoods. With the help of neighborhood organizations Los Sures, El Puenté, and Just Food, Inc., New York City Cooperative Extension and the Community, Food and Agriculture Program collaborated on a pilot agricultural marketing venture, which was established in Williamsburg, a low-income Hispanic, Hasidic and Polish neighborhood in Brooklyn.

Two marketing strategies were tried, including a community supported agriculture (CSA) program, and a restaurant-agriculture distribution scheme. The Rogowski Farm from the black-dirt region of Orange County, N.Y. (an area with rich muck soils about an hour-and-a-half north of New York City), was already anchoring the La Marquette Comunitaria, a farmers' market in Williamsburg, and agreed to sell shares and truck in produce. The Rogowskis, who



The Rogowski Farm Market and CSA at La Marquette Comunitaria, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York. Photo: Duncan Hilchey.

are traditional onion growers making the transition out of commodity agriculture, used the market as a site to distribute the CSA shares. The administrative functions of the CSA (e.g., recruiting shareholders and the sometimes difficult work of collecting money) were handled by El Puente. While in the city, the Rogowskis also distributed produce to restaurants in the neighborhood. A paid coordinator was responsible for taking orders from the restaurants.

A review of the Rogowskis' operating statement for 1999 indicated that the CSA was actually the most profitable of the two new marketing strategies. However, it was the "patching together" of these two with the farmers' market sales that made the trip into the city financially feasible for the Rogowskis. In the following year, the restaurant distribution was ended because it was difficult to manage orders without a coordinator. While restaurant deliveries were attractive to some of the trendy restaurants in Williamsburg, the idea did not catch on with the Latino restaurants that the project was intended to serve.

The Rogowski Farm has added another ethnic neighborhood farmers' market to its roster, and is continuing the Latino CSA in Williamsburg. Thus, this ethnic marketing program continues to be a success, with the key components being a determined and patient farmer and strong organizational and logistical support within the neighborhood.

Tips for connecting with an unfamiliar ethnic community

- Speaking English is fine in many ethnic communities, but make an effort to learn what you can of the language to ease communications and foster goodwill.
- Ask potential customers what products they might want and get the precise product information.
- Ask them how they prepare the products they buy.
- Learn the ethnic calendar, especially holidays and the food needs these entail.
- Think about direct wholesaling to local grocers, butchers and restaurants in the neighborhood.

References and Resources for Connecting with Ethnic Communities

Community Food Security Coalition: www.foodsecurity.org.

New Farmer Development Program: Cornell Cooperative Extension of New York City, 16 East 34 Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10016-4328; (212) 340-2937; e-mail jsn10@cornell.edu.

USDA Community Food Security Initiative: www.reeusda.gov/food_security/foodshp.htm.

Regional identity marketing is one of the hottest food and agriculture systems development strategies today.

One of the hottest food and agriculture systems development strategies being implemented by local communities today is regional identity marketing. This strategy brings together agriculture, tourism, value-adding, direct marketing and other agriculture development components previously described. As it relates to the food and agriculture industry, regional identity marketing capitalizes on a wide range of unique products that come from a geographically and culturally defined area.

With the exception of wine and cheese, the words “New York state” often conjure up little related to food or agriculture. However, break the state down into its component regions and you may get a different story: regional place names like Catskill, Finger

Arbitrary political boundaries are largely meaningless for marketing.

Lakes, Mohawk, Niagara and Adirondack suddenly evoke more emotional or romantic reactions about the area’s history, culture and landscape. Arbitrary political boundaries such as county or state lines are largely meaningless for the purpose of marketing. With few exceptions, farmers do not think in terms of county or state boundaries, but more along the lines of commodity affinity or geography. Some states with marketing campaigns such as New York (“Pride of New York”) or Massachusetts (“Massachusetts Grown and Fresher”) have begun exploring ways to link their programs with more localized regional food and agriculture marketing campaigns.

Local or regional marketing campaigns can build on locally meaningful marketing messages: family farmers as neighbors, keeping dollars in the local community, knowing the farmer who produced your food, preserving open space in the community, and unique cultural foods and cuisine (e.g., Amish, Pennsylvania Dutch, Down East, Appalachian). In these cases, consumers can often clearly see the direct impact of their food choices.

Regional identity and the concept of *terroir*

One way to better appreciate the value of regional identity marketing is to consider the meaning of the French word *terroir* (pronounced “tear-wha”). This is a complex French concept in which food is inextricably linked to its place of production.

Food also involves the interaction of history, culture and tradition, and the blood, sweat and tears of people.

Agricultural products are affected by unique local environmental conditions (such as microclimates). But some argue that food is more than the product of sun, soil, water and plants or animals; it also involves the interac-

tion of history, culture and tradition, and the blood, sweat and tears of people. This explains why Champagne can technically only be produced in the Champagne region of France, and Roquefort cheese can only be produced in the caves beneath the French village of Roquefort. The amalgamation of physical, biological and social aspects (food handling and processing traditions) results in food products that are unique to a particular community.

The concept of *terroir* is catching on outside of France, but in the U.S. is largely associated with wine regions, or “viticultural areas,” whose unique climatic conditions result in subtly different wines, even from the same grape varieties. There are also a number of *state and federal marketing orders* that restrict production of some crops to certain areas as defined by the producers themselves (e.g., Vidalia and Walla Walla onions). Steep fines can be exacted on anyone violating the terms of these orders, for example, by marketing products under trademarked labels that were actually produced outside the legal geographic boundaries.

Tips for uncovering *terroir* and marketing regional identity

Most regions have unique foodways, or food traditions linked to local agriculture, that are rapidly being buried by the homogenized, fast-food franchises that litter most main streets. These local foodways can be uncovered from many sources.

- Historians and local libraries often have recipe books published by local groups, such as churches, Daughters of the American Revolution, Girl Scouts and historical societies.
- Very early Census of Agriculture data (the census goes back to the mid-1800s) may be found at state agriculture schools (probably on microfilm or microfiche). The 1850 agriculture census data will reveal information about production of such local specialties as silk, hemp, flax and hops. Some of these may again be profitably produced as premium specialty items (that do not compete directly

Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty Program



Inspired by French-born chef and hospitality consultant Henry Benveniste, several Cooperative Extension educators and county tourism directors got together with chefs and farmers in upstate New York to develop and promote Finger Lakes agriculture and local cuisine.

With a bit of local foundation seed money and lots of in-kind support, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty (FLCB) has developed a program in which participating restaurants can put the FLCB logo on their menus and signage to indicate to their patrons that they buy at least some of their products from local farmers in the 14-county region. Terroir is one of the founding principles of the group. For more information, visit co.cayuga.ny.us/flcb.

with their industrial cousins). However, sometimes technical challenges and/or legal restrictions (as is the case with hemp) may complicate production.

- Local senior citizens are good sources of information about local food and agriculture. Young students of agriculture (e.g., 4-H or FFA) can interview local seniors to glean long-forgotten agricultural products and production practices similar to the “Foxfire” approach to learning used in Rabun County, Georgia (www.foxfire.org).
- Conduct research (perhaps using the Web) to determine if the community can indeed make some superlative claim about a specialty crop or product. A phrase like “Niagara Grape Region” (grape-juice production area), Cape Cod cranberry district, or the “Black Dirt Region” (onion production area) may be trademarked and used as part of a branding program to help educate consumers (especially tourists) about an area.
- Publicize and market what is unique. Educate your community around the rediscovered information; consider a local festival to generate interest. Phelps, New York, in the heart of one of the country’s largest cabbage production areas, holds a Sauerkraut Festival each year. This is an opportunity for a small-scale food processor to showcase more modern versions of this traditional food, such as gourmet sauerkraut with dill or garlic.

Culinary history resources in the eastern U.S.

Culinary historians specialize in documenting historical foodways, and may be a particularly good resource for information on local or regional agriculture, foods and cuisine. The following is a list of culinary historical societies in the eastern U.S.:

- **Culinary Historians of Boston:** Joe Carlin, 15 Kimball Avenue, Ipswich, MA 01938-1206; (617) 5645-1170; www.foodbooks.com.
- **Culinary Historians of Connecticut:** Rob Stone, 59 Partridge Court, Watertown, CT 06795; (860) 274-6526.
- **Culinary Historians of New York:** Sally O’Brien is membership chairman; 445 East 80th Street, Apt. A, New York, NY 10021; (212) 501-3738.
- **Culinary Historians of Washington:** Francine Berkowitz, 9407 Curran Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901; e-mail fcb@ic.si.edu.
- **Foodways Section of the American Folklore Society:** American Folklore Society, 4350 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203; (703) 528-1902; www.afsnet.org.

(continued)

- **Historic Foodways Society of the Delaware Valley:** Mercy Ingraham is membership secretary; 2 Water Street, Hulmeville, PA 19047.
- **American Institute of Wine and Food (AIWF):** 1550 Bryant Street, Suite 700, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 255-3008, fax (415) 255-2874; www.aiwf.org.
- **American Southern Food Institute:** ASFI, c/o Jan Shackelford, P.O. Box 313, Big Canoe, GA 30143; (706) 268-3776.
- **Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM):** For membership information contact Judith Sheriden, Secretary/Treasurer, 8774 Route 45 NW, North Bloomfield, OH 44450; e-mail sheriden@orwell.net; www.alhfam.org.

A complete list of culinary history resources, including sources for heirloom seeds, may be found at www.islesboro.net/fhn/linkhistorians.html.

References and Resources for Regional Identity Marketing

A Bibliography of American Ethnic Geography: www.valpo.edu/geomet/geo/courses/geo200/bib10.html.

Historical maps by state (and many local communities): www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/united_states.html.

Food History News (a quarterly newsletter about the history of American food): foodhistorynews.com.

Allen, Barbara and Thomas J. Schelereth, eds. 1990. *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*; University of Kentucky Press. \$18.00; to order, go to www.uky.edu/UniversityPress/books/sensplac.html.

Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty: co.cayuga.ny.us/flcb.

Buy-Local Campaigns

Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding

The phrase “Buy Local” is beginning to ring loudly around the country. Once the slogan of direct marketers and small growers, “buy local” is now becoming a maxim of big business, including large commercial growers, supermarket chains, and state departments of agriculture. Over \$550 million in agricultural products were sold directly to consumers in 1997, showing the strong desire of many consumers to buy from local farmers (see Figure 12).