5.0 Other Direct Marketing Strategies

Introduction to Other Direct Marketing Strategies

Resources

Unit 5.1: Farmers’ Markets and Roadside Stands

Unit 5.2: Collaborative Marketing Groups and Agricultural Cooperatives

Unit 5.3: Regional Agricultural Economic Development: “Buy Local” Campaigns

Unit 5.4: Institutional Buying Arrangements

Unit 5.5: Selling to Restaurants
Introduction: Other Direct Marketing Strategies

UNIT OVERVIEW
Along with Community Supported Agriculture, there are a number of other direct marketing strategies that growers are using to maintain the economic viability of their small farms. This unit introduces students to some of the innovative marketing approaches being explored by many small-scale producers, as well as by sustainable agriculture and community development activists interested in developing more sustainable food systems that support small-scale growers.

Unit 5.1: “Farmers’ Markets and Roadside Stands” provides an overview of the essential considerations for developing and managing direct market sales through farmers’ markets and roadside stands.

Unit 5.2: “Cooperative Marketing Groups and Producer Cooperatives” introduces the ways that groups of farmers can collaborate to address the many economic disadvantages small-scale growers face due to increasing consolidation within the industry and lack of economies of scale.

Unit 5.3: “Regional Agriculture Economic Development: Buy Local Campaigns” looks at the ways that farmers and sustainable agriculture advocates are developing regional membership organizations to address the issue of small farm viability. These organizations promote community education and facilitate business relationships between local producers and food retail enterprises.

Unit 5.4: “Institutional Buying Arrangements and Farm-to-School Programs” reviews the opportunities and challenges of direct sales to institutions such as schools and hospitals. These arrangements can secure stable markets for growers and provide institutions with fresh, locally produced foods.

Unit 5.5: “Selling to Restaurants” introduces students to the steps involved and the opportunities and challenges faced in selling directly to restaurants.

MODES OF INSTRUCTION
> LECTURES (1–2 hours per unit)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CONCEPTS
- Steps and considerations involved in direct marketing through farmers’ markets and roadside stands
- Advantages of marketing through cooperatives
- Regional marketing efforts and their potential benefits for growers and sustainable food systems advocates
- Opportunities and challenges of selling to various institutions and restaurants
Resources

BOOKS

Backyard Market Gardening: The Entrepreneur’s Guide To Selling What You Sow (5th printing), by Andy Lee and Jim Hightower. Good Earth Publications, 1993. A complete why-to and how-to of small-scale market farming. 320 pages. Email: goodearth@rockbridge.net


The Direct Marketing Resource Notebook, by Steve Bonney, Cris Carusi, Paul Johnson, and Meg Moynihan, Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, 1996. Includes case studies of different direct marketing enterprises, Midwestern state and federal marketing contacts, and an extensive resources section.


*Covers marketing and balanced farm management for the beginning or experienced farmer. See: www.smallfarmtoday.com.*

Market Farm Forms: Spreadsheet Templates for Planning and Tracking Information on Diversified Market Farm, by Marcie A. Rosenzweig. 1999.  
*Developed to help with planning, planting, and income diversification. The book explains how to enter your farm's information into the templates, and what the calculated data tell you. Cross-platform CD works seamlessly with Excel. Computerless farmers can use the printed forms with a pencil and calculator. 100 pages plus diskette. Order from Full Circle Organic Farm, 3377 Early Times Lane, Auburn, CA 95603. E-mail: fullcircle@jps.net.*


*Publication exploring various marketing options for vegetable crops producers. Available online: www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/id/id134/id134.htm.*


*Thorough and fun to read, this book generates a million ideas and helps you chart your course for creating a new small farm enterprise. See: www.metrofarm.com.*

*Provides extensive information in a clear, nuts-and-bolts manner. Contains invaluable insight and advice both for those selling at markets, and those organizing them. See: www.sare.org*

*Great general guide for the principles of intensive crop management. Includes strategies on defining market opportunities and marketing.*

*“This 20-page bulletin offers snapshots of the many alternatives to marketing commodities through conventional channels. Describes how to break into farmers markets; establish pick-your-own operations and farm stands; begin entertainment farming; open a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm; join or start a cooperative; sell to restaurants or through mail order and the Internet; how to process and direct-market meat; and ways to add value to farm products.” Online version at: www.sare.org/publications/marketing.htm.*

*Great overview of marketing techniques for a variety of situations. Appendices and resource list. Aimed at small- to medium-scale farmers. E-mail egibson@jps.net.*

*A concise guide to direct marketing to restaurants for small-scale growers. Includes chapters on: selecting restaurants; what to grow; deliveries and sales; working with caterers; working with other growers; market surveying; and sample letters to use for approaching restaurants. See: www.greentreenaturals.com.*
Other Direct Marketing Strategies

Resources

PERIODICALS

American Vegetable Grower/American Fruit Grower

Growing for Market
A very useful national monthly newsletter for direct market farmers. Covers production and marketing of vegetables and flowers. P.O. Box 3747, Lawrence, Kansas 66046. See: www.growingformarket.com.

Marketing Your Produce
A compilation of the best marketing articles that appeared in Growing For Market, 1992-1995. Chapters include information on specialty produce, selling to restaurants and/or supermarkets, farmers’ markets, CSAs, and expanding your market. Ends with a list of recommended books. See above for ordering information.

The Packer
A business newspaper for the produce industry. See: www.thepacker.com

Small Farm Digest
A subscription newsletter published three times a year by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Discusses issues affecting today’s small farmers. Small Farm Digest is available on the CSREES home page: www.csrees.usda.gov/newsroom/newsletters/smallfarmdigest/sfd.html.

Small Farm News
The Small Farm Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the UC Davis Small Farm Center. The newsletter features farmer and farm advisor profiles, research articles, farm-related print and web resources, news items and a calendar of state, national and international events. See: www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/pubs/SFNews/news.html for the on-line editions.

ARTICLE

WEB SITES

Agribusiness Online:  
www.agribusinessonline.com/  
Agribusiness Online is a free market intelligence and technical information service for agribusiness professionals. Provides market news, prices, surveys, trade regulations, research, events, post-harvest, and production guides from various extension services

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center’s Organic Agriculture Products: Marketing and Trade Resources:  
www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/index.html  
A comprehensive listing of electronic resources addressing the following subject areas: Regulation, Laws, and Legislation governing organic production and trade; How-to guides on Marketing, Business Planning, and Sample Enterprise Budgets; Guides to Data, Suppliers, Outlets, and Event; Industry and Data Sources; Market and Consumer Studies; Support Organizations. Compiled by Mary V. Gold of the National Agricultural Library in association with the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ATTRA—National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. Direct Marketing. Business Management Series:  
attra.ncat.org/marketing.html  
Contains extensive listings of concise online publications addressing all aspects of direct marketing and alternative marketing arrangements including; marketing of organic products, institutional buying relationship, cooperatives, value added, selling to restaurants, agricultural tourism, farmers’ markets, and CSA.

California Department of Food and Agriculture Regulations:  
www.cdfa.ca.gov/cdfa/pendingregs/  
California Department of Food and Agriculture Regulations (CDFAR) is a California State agricultural agency with divisions of Animal Health & Food Safety Services; Fairs and Expositions; Inspection Services; Marketing Services; Measurement Standards; and Plant Health & Pest Prevention Services. The web site contains links to the services and programs of the above agencies as well as links to county agricultural commissioners and official statements and policies of the USDA, FDA, and CDFAR on current events in agriculture.

California Federation of Certified Farmer’s Markets:  
www.cafarmersmarkets.com/  
An information clearinghouse on certified farmers’ markets in California. A comprehensive information on certified farmers’ markets; links to locate farmers’ markets in a given area; product specific listings of associations and organizations; links to information on agriculture and trade policy; and much more. The California Federation of Certified Farmers’ Markets is a statewide non-profit membership organization of California Certified Farmers’ Markets.

Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF):  
www.caff.org  

Direct Marketing Resource Guide Online Database:  
www.sare.org/publications/dmrg.htm;  
wsare.usu.edu/marketing/search.cfm  
This extensive annotated listing includes practical, high quality resources such as print publications, videos, and web resources that will help growers meet their direct marketing goals. The resources are organized into 9 categories including: Farmers’ Markets; Community Supported Agriculture; Agricultural Cooperatives; Farm-to-School/Selling to Institutions; Direct Marketing Livestock; Roadside Stands/Marks; Selling to Restaurants; and Value-Added Production/Marketing.

Growing New Farmers:  
www.growingnewfarmers.org  
Growing New Farmers is a community of new farmers and service providers organized through the New England Small Farm Institute. This web-site will assist the spectrum of beginning farmers from those assessing whether they want to get started to those finalizing business plans. Though created for farmers in the Northeast, it has a wealth of information for California farmers including worksheets, articles, and a user-friendly question and answer section.
Nolo Press:
www.nolo.com
Dedicated to helping people handle their own everyday legal matters or make more informed legal decisions, Nolo Press publishes reliable, plain-English books, software, forms, and up-to-date legal information covering almost any legal topic. Includes an extensive list of publications and online articles on the types of legal ownership structures that are available and do-it-yourself manuals on forming sole proprietorships; partnerships; limited partnerships; limited liability companies (LLC); nonprofit corporations; and nonprofit cooperatives. Includes links to other helpful web sites.

Organic Agricultural Products: Marketing and Trade Resources:
www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC_pubs/OAP/srb0301.html
A collaborative program of the USDA Agricultural Research Services and the National Agricultural Library to provide marketing and trade information for organic agriculture products. Contains information on: Regulations, Laws and Legislation; How-to Guides; Guides to Data, Suppliers, Outlets and Events; Industry Data Sources; Market and Consumer Studies; Support Organizations; and a listing of appendices containing USDA National Organic Program standard for certification, production, labeling and marketing.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA):
www.ota.com/index.html
The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for the organic industry in North America. OTA’s mission is to encourage global sustainability through promoting and protecting the growth of diverse organic trade.

Produce Marketing Association
www.pma.com
Home page of the Produce Marketing Association. Lists conventions, other events, links to the web pages of major produce companies including organic.

Resources for Economic Viability in Sustainable Agriculture:
www.mvls.info/revsa/
Annotated resource listings compiled by the Mohawk Valley Library System containing business planning resources for small scale farmers (see Generalized Tools for Small Businesses)

UC Small Farm Center:
www.sfc.ucdavis.edu
The UC Small Farm Center (SFC) serves as a clearinghouse for questions from farmers, marketers, farm advisors, trade associations, government officials and agencies, and the academic community. The SFC maintains a library of books, scientific and popular journals, reports, directories, and periodicals covering production, marketing, and policy issues. SFC publishes manuals, proceedings, pamphlets, leaflets, and a quarterly newsletter that includes news of upcoming events, publications, topical issues, and profiles of farmers and farm advisors. The SFC organizes and coordinates statewide conferences, workshops, and symposia and supports advisors, farmers’ markets, and farm organizations in regional and local programs.

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service:
www.ams.usda.gov
The Agricultural Marketing Service includes six commodity programs providing standardization, grading and market news services for those commodities. The AMS Science and Technology Program provides centralized scientific support to various AMS technical programs (e.g., Plant Variety Protection, Pesticide Testing and Pesticide Recordkeeping Programs). The AMS Transportation Program addresses problems of U.S. and world agricultural transportation. The Marketing program serves to increase the overall effectiveness of the food marketing system, provide better quality products to the consumer at reasonable cost, improve market access for growers with small- to medium-sized farms, and promote regional economic development.

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Farmer Direct Marketing Bibliography:
www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/
An extensive listing of online resources relating to direct marketing.
USDA AMS Market News Service:
www.ams.usda.gov/marketnews.htm
Provides current U.S. price and sales information. One of the best sources for daily to weekly reports for all kinds of commodity prices, bids, imports and exports in the U.S., from dairy, feedstuffs, fruit and vegetables, futures, grains, hay, livestock, meat, poultry, tobacco. Reports cover both domestic and international markets. Other reports include information on volume, quality, condition, and other market data on farm products in specific markets and marketing areas.

VIDEO

This video presents eight Northeast vegetable farmers who describe their successful use of a variety of innovative marketing strategies. 48 minutes. Available from www.smallfarm.org/bookstore/.