

## Chapter 3

# A Sampling of *Growing Home* Development Projects and Strategies

## Introduction

In the previous chapters, we focused on the context for and the principles of organizing a community-based food and agriculture systems development program. In Chapter 3 we sketch out a variety of specific *Growing Home* strategies that might be implemented, including descriptions of the strategies, their pros and cons, tips for their successful implementation, and possible pitfalls. These examples are *community-based strategies* as opposed to farm-based strategies. They are undertaken by a community to benefit multiple farmers and community members, not by a single farmer acting independently.

Chapter 3 is not in any way intended to be an exhaustive list, but a source of ideas and inspiration. For more information we recommend that you consult the **Resource tips** throughout each chapter and the **References and Resources** section following each.

## Communities Can Help Forge Stronger Links Between Farmers and Consumers

Extension educators and farm advocates are fond of telling stories about schoolchildren who don't know where food comes from: "milk comes from a store," "eggs come from a carton." And the point is usually made that consumers just don't know about agriculture, and therefore cannot relate to farm issues. Indeed, this misinformation is surprising and frustrating. But, in fact, the reverse may also be said of commodity farmers. How many know precisely where their farm products go once they leave their farms? How likely is a farmer to know who the final consumer of his or her product is? This suggests that consumer education is only half the solution to this problem of mutual unfamiliarity. The other half has to do with building farmers' knowledge of the food system and developing their skills as individuals and as groups in negotiating that ever-evolving industry. This will be critical to their survival in the future.

**Today's family farmers may need the attitude and skills of their grandparents more than of their parents.**

One of the ironies of the industrialization and globalization of the food and agriculture system is that today's family farmers may need the attitudes and skills of their grandparents more than those of their parents. Until World War II, farmers had a wide range of skills, saw the benefits of spreading risk over several enterprises, and were very cautious about taking on debt. Indeed, farmers were so thrifty,

stubborn and self-reliant that the concept of agribusiness really didn't exist. "Pay as you go" was a basic approach to their livelihoods, an attitude that got many farmers through the Depression and Dust Bowl eras.

Between the 1940s and '70s, national public policy to promote modernization encouraged many farmers to grow through technology and specialization. Agribusiness, as purveyor of the new way of farming, grew dramatically. Profits for family farms shrank as costs skyrocketed and prices received bottomed out due to gluts in the commodity markets. The result was the most rapid decline of farms at any time in American history—much faster even than today.

### **“Getting big” or “getting out” are not the only options anymore**

But the consolidation and concentration was costly to the remaining farmers in other ways. They also paid high prices in knowledge, power and control. Today, many decisions about farms are made in corporate boardrooms, perhaps even more often than they are made at the farm kitchen tables where they once were made. A farmer's choices about what to plant, and how to plant, harvest and market it are increasingly made by non-farmer businesses and government. In the past it was generally believed that this left farmers with two basic options:

- Option 1.** Get big and depend on technology.
- Option 2.** Get out, and work for a larger farmer, find another profession, or retire.

However, since the energy crisis in the early 1970s, a third option has evolved and is coming into maturity.

- Option 3.** Become entrepreneurial and sustainable—sometimes called a “New Agriculturalist” or “Agripreneur.”

Options 1 and 2 constituted the long-standing policy actively supported by the USDA and the Land Grant system. Option 3, the “New Agriculture,” or “Civic Agriculture” (Lyson, 2000) combines (1) land stewardship, (2) community-mindedness, and (3) business savvy. Ironically, new farmers coming in with small, part-time retirement or lifestyle farms are more likely to understand the relevance and symbiosis of these three components.

**The “New Agriculture” combines**  
**(1) land stewardship,**  
**(2) community-mindedness, and**  
**(3) business savvy.**

In contrast, traditional commodity farmers have a tougher row to hoe since they are less likely to have the ability to transition to Option 3, having scaled up and invested in narrow, commodity-production systems. To make matters worse for those in really isolated rural areas, there are fewer opportunities to move out of specialized, major commodities and diversify into other products. But this does not mean that traditional or commodity producers cannot be “new agriculturalists.” In fact many are “flexibly specializing”

in higher-value products (such as nutraceuticals, oil or fuel crops), or working with other similar-minded farmers in limited liability corporations or value-adding cooperatives (see *New Generation Cooperatives*, page 46). But commodities still have a long way to go. Apple growers in the Northeast, for example, may need to work together in new organizational forms to own their product up through the supply chain in order to control quality and eliminate the current poor handling and marketing of their products. Likewise, with shrinking government supports and overly complicated marketing and distribution schemes, dairy farmers need to study opportunities in the value-adding arena.

## Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding

Marketing and value-adding are key strategies in bridging the gap between producers and consumers—especially local residents. We focus on these strategies because the fact is that future opportunities for farmers in the New Agriculture will come from the Three Ds: (1) decommodification, (2) diversification, and (3) differentiation. **Decommodification** is a strategic choice to walk away from the no-win treadmill of global overproduction and low prices, which forces consolidation and drains rural communities of their resources. It is a calculated decision to invest less in common production techniques and make more connections to local and regional markets. **Diversification** is a strategic management choice to spread the business risks over several enterprises. If one enterprise fails, profit from the others may reduce the impact on the family and community. Finally, **differentiation** is to strategically seek profitable niches in the **marketscape**. A marketscape consists of all the real or potential opportunities for farmers in a given area to sell their products (Lyson and Green, 1999). This includes local and regional restaurants, grocery stores, processors, institutions, and farmers’ markets. The elements of a marketscape can be categorized as follows in Figure 4.

<b>Figure 4. General marketscape categories</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Retail sales</b>	Sales directly to consumers	Farmers’ market, Food Circle, CSA network, producer directory, U-pick, roadside stand, home delivery
<b>Direct wholesale</b>	Sales directly to retailers	Regional wholesale market, auction, supermarket, gourmet shop, food co-ops
<b>Wholesale</b>	Sales through or to a middleman	Wholesaler, broker, jobber or other distributor
<b>Contract</b>	Fixed-price sales based on volume	Meat, fruit, grain, and vegetable specialty processors
<b>Cooperative</b>	Wholesale through a farmer-owned organization	Dairy, fruit and vegetable cooperatives, food-processing cooperatives

Within communities, local agencies and community-based groups can support the development of this marketing infrastructure by addressing regulatory barriers (such as zoning), by conducting market research, by developing new markets (for example by connecting producers with buyers), and by promoting local products. Key people in the local or regional marketscape ought to be participants in the development process.

The following are examples of specific community-based marketing and value-adding strategies.

<b>Produce Auctions</b>	<b>Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding</b>
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The 1990s saw a resurgence of this age-old method of selling local farm produce. Auctions, like their organizational cousins, farmers' markets, are a growing part of the marketscape. The new produce auctions have all the characteristics of independent self-help organizations, and are often established through collaborations of "plain sect" (Amish and Mennonite) and "English" people. Perhaps as many as two dozen local auctions operate in the eastern U.S. today, mainly in the mid-Atlantic states, Ohio, and as far south as Kentucky. Pennsylvania farm groups have created ten wholesale produce auctions over the last 15 years. There is plenty of room for more.

Typically, auctions are held several times a week. The produce is graded, pre-boxed or palletized in advance and brought to the auction barn. Following the auction, a cashier collects money from the buyer, keeping 10 percent for the auction house. Buyers are often roadside stand or farm store operators, but restaurants, grocery

**Restaurants, grocery stores, families and individuals come to find deals on higher quality, locally grown produce.**

stores and even families and individuals come to find deals on higher quality, locally grown produce. It is surprising how few such auctions exist on the outskirts of larger urban areas, where restaurants and small groceries could take advantage of them.

Wholesale produce auctions can be very grassroots developments. The Hopkinsville, Kentucky, produce auction raised enough equity to construct an auction barn through sales of \$1,000 shares to growers and others in the community. According to F.W. Owen of the Homer Producer Auction in Homer, Ohio, the keys to successful auctions are:

**Resource tip**

The basics of starting and running a produce auction are covered in the publication *Growing Produce II*, available for \$10 plus \$1.50 for shipping and handling from:

Raymond J. Yoder  
7000 Salt Creek Road,  
Fredericksburg, OH 44627

(1) keeping committed growers (since prices fluctuate throughout the season, loyalty can be a problem); (2) keeping new buyers coming; and (3) maintaining an educational program for growers to improve quality, consistency and keep them motivated. Zoning can also be a real challenge, since constructing or expanding facilities may be limited by the allowed use of a property.



Horse-drawn farm wagons mix with trucks and tractors as local farmers wait to go through the drive-in at the Leola Produce Auction in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. [www.newholland.com/na/news/nhn/Oct01/V47No7\\_2.htm](http://www.newholland.com/na/news/nhn/Oct01/V47No7_2.htm). Photo: Dennis L. Hughes.



Inside the Leola Produce Auction in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Photo: Dennis L. Hughes.

## References and Resources for Produce Auctions

Homer Produce Auction: [www.bright.net/~fwo/Prod.html](http://www.bright.net/~fwo/Prod.html).

Tubene, S. and J. Hanson. March 2002. The wholesale produce auction: An alternative marketing strategy for small farms. *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, 17:1.

<b>Community Supported Agriculture</b>	<b>Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding</b>
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Concerns about the quality and safety of food, lack of community connections, and dwindling number of farms have led to the establishment of Community Supported Agriculture farms (CSAs) in many areas of the U.S. The first CSA farms were established in New England in the late 1980s. According to the Robyn Van En Center for CSA Resources, "CSA is a relationship of mutual support and commitment between a local farmer and community members who pay the farmer an annual membership fee to cover the production costs of the farm. In turn, members receive a weekly share of the harvest during the local growing season. The arrangement guarantees a farmer financial support and enables many small- to moderate-scale organic family farms to remain in business. Ultimately, CSA creates 'agriculture-supported communities,' where members receive a wide variety of really fresh foods harvested at their peak of ripeness, flavor, and vitamin and mineral content" (Robyn Van En Center, [www.csacenter.org](http://www.csacenter.org)).

Shares typically range from \$200 to \$600 and sometimes more, depending on the size of a share and member work requirements. A share is usually enough produce to feed a family of four for five to eight months. Many CSAs are concerned with community food-security issues, such as neighborhood access to fresh, healthful food, and they may offer share subsidies or discounts to lower-



Members of West Haven Farm, a CSA in Ithaca, New York, work in the fields. Info at [westhavenfarm.ithaca.ny.us](http://westhavenfarm.ithaca.ny.us).

income families. The number of shares required to adequately support one farmer, perhaps 60 to 300 shares, varies considerably with price, volume, variety and locale. Unfortunately, some CSAs operate without an adequate number of shareholders.

One estimate puts the number of CSAs in the U.S. at around 728, with New York (68) California (65) and Massachusetts (54) leading the way (see Figure 5). However, rural states like Vermont, Maine and Iowa actually have more CSAs per million in population than do many more urban states. Texas, Florida and even California have a smaller proportion of CSAs than their populations might indicate, suggesting great opportunities for CSAs.

No two CSAs are identical. Many CSAs are organized by individual farmers; however, a community, agency, organization or group of shareholders can also organize a CSA and recruit one or more farmers to supply it. Some CSAs are affiliated with food banks or other emergency food programs. A supporting “core group” or a sponsoring organization can handle shareholder recruitment, product distribution, record-keeping and other administrative duties, freeing up the farmer(s) to concentrate on production.

**Figure 5. Concentration of Community Supported Agriculture farms by state and U.S., 2002**

New York state may have the largest number of CSAs in the U.S., but Vermont actually has the distinction of having the highest per-capita concentration of CSAs. California’s concentration (CI= 74) is less than expected given its large population. The state of New Jersey also has a surprisingly low CI. Delaware was the only state with no reported CSAs. Of the Northeast states, only New Jersey and West Virginia had a CI lower than the national CI.

US and Top 10 States	# of CSAs	Population	CSAs/Million Population (C <sub>1</sub> )	Concentration Index (CI)
United States	728	281,421,906	2.58	100
New York	68	18,976,457	3.58	139
California	65	33,871,648	1.91	74
Massachusetts	54	6,349,097	8.50	329
Washington	45	5,894,121	7.63	295
Wisconsin	44	5,363,675	8.20	317
Pennsylvania	41	12,281,054	3.33	129
Iowa	36	2,926,324	12.30	476
Oregon	34	3,421,399	9.93	384
Vermont	32	608,827	52.56	2032
Minnesota	32	4,919,479	6.50	251

(Continued)

**Figure 5. Concentration of Community Supported Agriculture farms by state and U.S., 2002** (continued)

US and Top 10 States	# of CSAs	Population	CSAs/Million Population (C <sub>1</sub> )	Concentration Index (CI)
<b>Other Northeast States</b>				
Maryland	19	5,296,486	3.58	139
Maine	16	1,274,923	12.54	485
New Jersey	14	8,414,350	1.66	64
Connecticut	11	3,405,565	3.23	125
New Hampshire	9	1,235,786	7.28	282
Rhode Island	5	1,048,319	4.76	184
West Virginia	4	1,808,344	2.21	86

Data Sources: U.S. Census (population data) and Robyn Van En Center, [www.csacenter.org](http://www.csacenter.org). Prepared by the Community, Food and Agriculture Program, Cornell University, 2002.

**Note:** The CSA Concentration Index is not a predictor of success in any particular state. It simply compares the number of CSAs per million people per state compared to the U.S. as a whole. The index was created by first calculating the number of CSAs per million people in a state (the concentration, or "C<sub>1</sub>") using the formula  $C_1 = N/(P/1,000,000)$ , where N is the number of CSAs in a given state and P is the state population. The formula for the Concentration Index (CI) was  $(C_1 \times 100)/2.5869$ , where C<sub>1</sub> is the concentration of CSA in a given state, and 2.5869 is the concentration of CSAs in the U.S. overall.

**Support CSA development by assisting with zoning issues and marketing.**

Challenges in developing CSAs include establishing an equitable price per share, adequately remunerating farmers, recruiting a sufficient number of shareholders, and mitigating the time required from the farmer(s) to manage the CSA. In a community with several CSAs, competition for shareholders can be minimized by encouraging networking and cooperation among CSAs, and by hosting CSA sign-up days. See also

the next section on Food Circles.

**References and Resources for Community Supported Agriculture**

Biodynamic Association, Building 1002B, Thoreau Center, The Presidio, P.O. Box 29135, San Francisco, CA 94129-0135; (888) 516-7797; e-mail [biodynamic@aol.com](mailto:biodynamic@aol.com); Web site [www.biodynamics.com/csa.html](http://www.biodynamics.com/csa.html).

Henderson, Elizabeth and Robyn Van En. 2000. *Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community Supported Agriculture*. Chelsea Green Publishing Co.; [www.chelseagreen.com/Sharing](http://www.chelseagreen.com/Sharing).

Just Food, Inc., 307 7th Avenue, Suite 1201, New York, NY 10001; (212) 645-9880; e-mail [info@justfood.org](mailto:info@justfood.org); Web site [www.justfood.org](http://www.justfood.org).

Robyn Van En Center, [www.csacenter.org](http://www.csacenter.org).

## Food Circles

### Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding

The Food Circle approach can be seen as taking the farm-based CSA concept to the larger community level. A food circle is a network of food production, processing and marketing enterprises (including CSAs), which, along with concerned citizens and supporting groups, fosters the growth of local food and agriculture systems. The Food Circle model has been developed by the Food Circle Networking Project at the University of Missouri. They provide the following description:

A Food Circle is a new way of conceiving of and organizing our food and agricultural systems. It links the many people involved in food production together in interdependent, holistic ways. When we conceive of our food system as a circle, we acknowledge that we are connected with every other in that circle through the act of food production.

Practically, a Food Circle is concerned with promoting the consumption of safe, regionally grown food that will encourage sustainable agriculture and help to maintain farmers, who will sustain rural areas. While the concept sounds simple, it means that we must radically change the way we participate in the act of growing and consuming food. (Source: [www.foodcircles.missouri.edu/vision.htm](http://www.foodcircles.missouri.edu/vision.htm).)

Based on this paradigm-shifting philosophy, food circle activities might include:

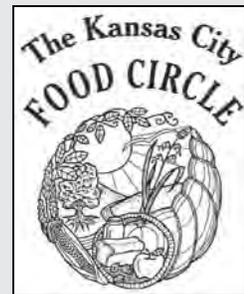
- Encouraging self-sufficiency, healthy lifestyles and ecologically vibrant local environments.
- Promoting family farms and local food businesses by helping them market food locally.
- Educating the public about the economic, social and environmental consequences of our food consumption choices.
- Publishing information on the seasonal availability of local foods.
- Organizing events such as church picnics and potlucks where farmers, processors, grocers and local folks can share information.
- Organizing a speakers bureau for community groups and local government.

#### Kansas City Food Circle

Benefits of membership include subscription buying services (e.g.,

multiple farm and food business CSA), a local food and resource directory, a hotline with seasonal food availability updates, special food events and celebrations, and a speakers bureau. Membership is scaled: \$10 (low-income), \$20 (individual), and \$30 (family).

Kansas City Food Circle  
c/o Ben Kjelshus  
P.O. Box 30271  
Kansas City, MO 64112  
(816) 374-5899  
[bkjelshus@aol.com](mailto:bkjelshus@aol.com)



## References and Resources for Food Circles

Food Circles Networking Project: Ana Montoya, Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia, 105 Sociology, Columbia, MO 65211; (573) 882-3776; e-mail MontoyaA@missouri.edu.

### Restaurant Agriculture

### Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding

“Restaurant agriculture” or “culinary agriculture” are phrases used to describe a production and marketing strategy in which farmers specialize in wholesaling their products directly to restaurants.

These farmers become adept at cultivating relationships with chefs who are looking for high quality, and for whom price is less of a factor. The basis for successful restaurant agriculture is **trust**—trust that the grower will regularly deliver excellent products, and trust that the restaurant owner will pay a fair price on time. To maintain this level of trust requires developing a high degree of familiarity among the growers and restaurant chefs, managers and owners. Initial or annual visits to one another’s businesses seems essential to a complete understanding of each partner’s needs. Farmers must be prepared to provide outstanding service for the restaurateurs, for example in handling short-notice emergency requests, growing specialty products, and delivering top quality on specific items.

Restaurant agriculture has been pioneered by enterprising farmers able to meet the demands of restaurateurs for the highest quality and reliability. It



Mike Rogowski drops off a delivery of fresh-farm produce to a restaurateur in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York. Photo: Duncan Hilchey.

#### Tips for direct wholesaling to restaurants

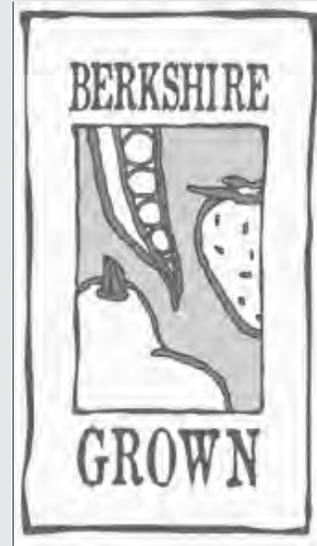
- Offer free samples of introductory crops.
- Call ahead to arrange a visit in person; talk to both owner and chef.
- Contact chefs only during lulls in the day.
- Invite the restaurant owner, manager, chef(s) and other staff to the farm.
- Resolve misunderstandings quickly. Deliver what was expected as an order, even if it must come from another farm.
- Offer suggestions on how to prepare fresh products in season, but not to the point of jeopardizing the account.
- Offer suggestions on preparing dishes with non-prime cuts of meat (e.g., for stews), or vegetable trimmings (e.g., beet greens) so chefs can get the most value out of their purchases.
- Consider working with several other farmers to purvey a wider range of products, including fruit, vegetables, dairy, poultry, etc.

also represents an opportunity for community-based action. Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty in upstate New York, and Berkshire Grown in western Massachusetts are examples of community-based restaurant agriculture initiatives. In these cases, regional groups of restaurants, farmers and supporting organizations work together to better connect restaurateurs and farmers, and to promote local cuisine and agriculture. Many types of farms and food businesses—produce growers, livestock and poultry farmers, wineries, local food processors, bakeries, florists—can benefit from this type of collaboration. (See Regional Identity Marketing, page 58, for more on Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, and page 64 for more on Berkshire Grown.)

### **Berkshire Grown’s Business-to-Business “Fresh Fax”**

Berkshire Grown is a community-based organization that has been encouraging links between local food producers and consumers in the Berkshire region of western Massachusetts since 1985. It receives funding from the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture and local foundations and donations.

A unique aspect of Berkshire Grown is its Business-to-Business “Fresh Fax” program that coordinates what is seasonably available from local food producers with what local buyers (especially restaurants) need. The program coordinator calls local member food producers and prepares information on what is available in a given week during the growing season, then faxes this information to the buyers. More than 60 food buyers (mostly restaurants) and 90 local farmers and food producers are a part of the program. Results of an evaluation conducted in 2000 suggests that local grower-members of the program are experiencing increased sales. Buyers bought 16 percent more locally grown products than in 1999. Farmers reported that the **visibility** of Berkshire Grown led to a higher demand for locally produced food, and this was the most important factor in creating more sales. The directory of members, Fresh Fax, and networking meetings were identified as the next most helpful parts of the program.



### **References and Resources for Restaurant Agriculture**

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) has information on marketing meats to restaurants and institutional markets, at [www.attra.org/attra-pub/altmeat.html](http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/altmeat.html).

Berkshire Grown: [www.berkshiregrown.com](http://www.berkshiregrown.com).

Chef’s Collaborative: [www.chefnet.com/cc2000](http://www.chefnet.com/cc2000).

Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty: [co.cayuga.ny.us/flcb](http://co.cayuga.ny.us/flcb).

If your local community does not yet have its own farmers' market, establishing such a market may be one of the first development strategies to consider. The number of farmers' markets in the U.S. has grown from several dozen in the 1960s to more than 2,800 in 2000. Increasing numbers of farmers depend on these markets for all or some of their farm income. According to the USDA, 19,000 U.S. farmers reported that farmers' markets were their sole revenue source in the year 2000 (USDA, Agriculture Marketing Service).

Consumers and local communities also benefit from farmers' markets. Not only do these markets provide fresh, nutritious foods, they often contribute to downtown revitalization, providing a vibrant public crossroads and enhancing the sense of vitality and quality of life in the community.

Our research at the Community, Food and Agriculture Program indicates that farmers' markets also serve as small-business "incubators," helping entrepreneurs establish their

**Farmers' markets serve as product-testing grounds for farmers, food processors and craftspeople.**

small businesses at low cost and low risk. Farmers' markets serve as product-testing

grounds for farmers, food processors and craftspeople. Many vendors' businesses expand beyond the market, gaining access to additional markets in and beyond the local community.

The USDA reports that 82 percent of farmers' markets are self-sustaining—

**Figure 6. Top 10 things vendors want to change in order to strengthen their farmers' markets**

A 1998 study of New York and Iowa farmers' market vendors reported the features they wanted to change about their markets.

1. Increase market advertising and publicity.
2. Attract other types of customers.
3. Increase the diversity of products offered.
4. Increase the number of vendors.
5. Increase cooperation among vendors.
6. Eliminate non-local products from the market.
7. Increase the availability of public restrooms.
8. Provide more or better customer parking.
9. Eliminate reselling of products.
10. Improve market leadership.

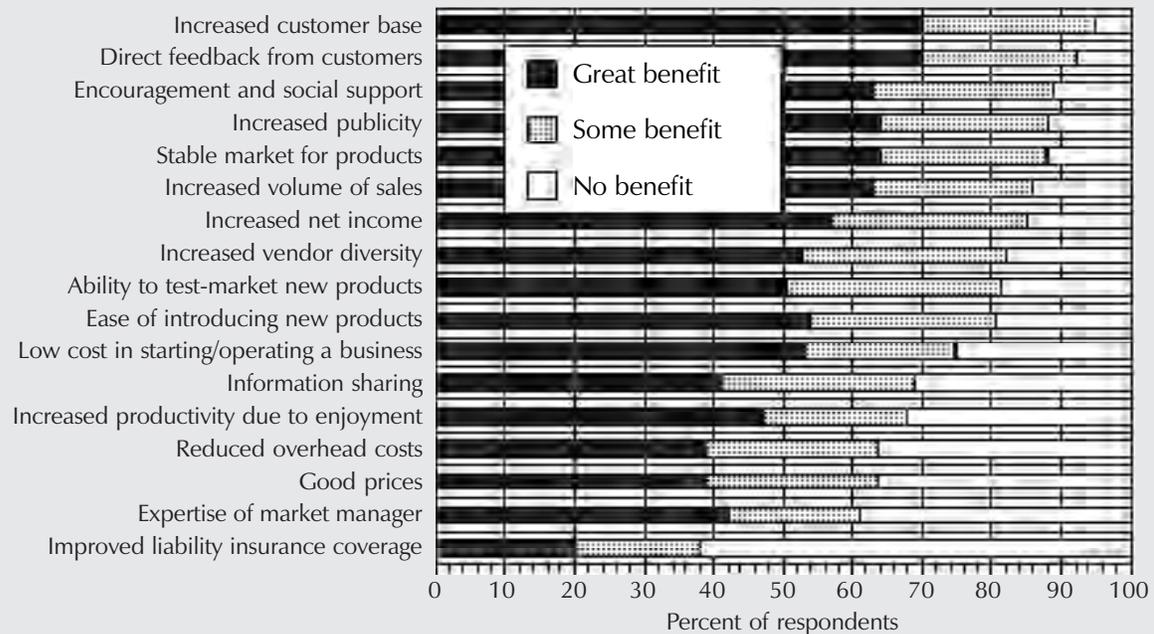
Local agencies and organizations can provide resources and technical assistance to farmers' markets for dealing with these needs and other problems that arise. Fundraising for advertising and amenities, along with help in setting policies, are key support activities of sponsors.

that is, market income (from membership and stall fees) is sufficient to cover the costs associated with market operation. Fifty-eight percent of farmers' markets participate in WIC coupon, Food Stamps, or local or state nutrition programs, and this is an important source of vendor sales. Proposed funding cuts for these programs pose a serious threat to many farmers' markets.

Local government, Cooperative Extension and nongovernmental organizations can support new and existing farmers' markets by helping with promotion, regulatory and zoning problems, location issues, educational programs for vendors (on merchandising, money handling, post-harvest handling and food safety, business planning, customer service, etc.) and by providing leadership training and conflict mediation.

**Figure 7. The benefits of farmers' markets to vendors**

Surveys of vendors of farmers' markets in New York show the important role these markets play in helping small producers get up and running.



**Note:** The expertise of market managers could be improved through training at National Farmers Direct Marketing Conferences or through workshops at local community colleges. This data came from a survey of farmers' markets conducted by the Community, Food and Agriculture Program (n=115) in New York in 1993.

### References and Resources for Farmers' Markets

Hilchey, D., T.A Lyson and G.W. Gillespie. 1995. *Farmers' Markets and Local Economic Development: Entrepreneurship, Small Business Incubation and Job Creation in the Rural Northeast*. Farming Alternatives Program: Community Agriculture Development Bulletin Series.

Lyson, T.A, G.W. Gillespie and D.H. Hilchey. 1995. Farmers' markets and the local community: Bridging the formal and informal economy. *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*. 10(3): 108–113.

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association. Contact: Charlie Touchette, 62 White Loaf Road, Southampton, MA 01073; (888) 884-9270; e-mail [nafdma@map.com](mailto:nafdma@map.com); [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com).

USDA national list of farmers' markets by state: [www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/facts.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/facts.htm).

<b>Cooperative Marketing</b>	<b>Community-Based Marketing and Value-Adding</b>
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Many farmer cooperatives were started in the 1930s and '40s in the U.S. as a means of giving smaller family farmers a better chance to compete in the marketplace. Over time, however, many farmers have become disenchanted with their co-ops. Industrialization and consolidation of the food and agriculture system often made it difficult for these cooperatives to compete, so many of them disbanded or consolidated with larger cooperatives, especially in the dairy industry. The decline of small commodity co-ops has left a bitter taste for many farmers.

However, some farmers, especially those growing fruits and vegetables, have a particular affinity for their co-ops. Many blueberry growers in

Maine, for example, are generally satisfied with the stable market the co-ops have provided. Furthermore, the number of very small cooperatives (less than \$500,000 in annual gross sales) is actually growing in the Northeast as small and part-time produc-

**Figure 8. Small fruit and vegetable grower co-ops on the increase in the Northeastern U.S.**

Sales Category (\$1,000s)	# Co-ops 1994	# Co-ops 2000	Percent Change
Less than \$500	14	18	28.57%
\$500 to \$1,999	6	7	16.67%
\$2,000 to \$2,449	3	2	-33.33%
\$2,500 to \$4,999	5	4	-20.00%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	7	4	-42.86%
\$9,999 or less	35	35	0.00%
\$10,000 or more	7	5	-28.57%
Total	42	40	-4.76%

Source: Prepared by CFAP with data provided by the USDA, Rural Business/Cooperative Service.