

Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing Examples from Direct Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Enterprises



Western Extension Marketing Committee

Western Extension Marketing Committee Authors

Russell Tronstad (Managing Editor), University of Arizona

DeeVon Bailey, Utah State University

Larry Lev, Oregon State University

Ramiro Lobo, University of California, Davis

Stuart T. Nakamoto, University of Hawaii

Wendy Umberger, Colorado State University

Ruby Ward, Utah State University

Other Contributing Authors

Kent Fleming, University of Hawaii

Dean Miner, Utah State University

William Riggs, University of Nevada, Reno

Rod Sharp, Colorado State University

Etaferahu Takele, University of California, Davis

Dawn Thilmany, Colorado State University

Editing, Layout, and Design

Nancy Bannister, University of Arizona

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Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing: Examples from Direct Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Enterprises

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Dean Miner; Russell Tronstad; Stuart T. Nakamoto;
William Riggs; Ken Love; Rod Sharp

Introduction

Ramiro Lobo

Creative Growers

Gary Stephenson

Seabreeze Organic Farm

Ramiro Lobo

Nalo Farms

Stuart T. Nakamoto

Love Family Farms

Ken Love

Cattail Creek Farm

Oregon State University Extension
and Experiment Station Communication

Rocky Mountain Beef Cooperative

Rod Sharp

The Holualoa Kona Coffee Company

Stuart T. Nakamoto

Sunfresh Farms

Russell Tronstad

English Farm

Rod Sharp

Schnepf Farms

Russell Tronstad

Mother Nature's Farm

Russell Tronstad

Southridge Farms

Dean Miner

Mebane Farms

Rod Sharp

Honeyacre Produce Company

Honeyacre Enterprises Ltd.

American Pet Diner

William Riggs

Thompson Farms

The Food Alliance

Harward Farms

Dean Miner

Summary

Ramiro Lobo

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Preface

In recent years, traditional commodity marketing channels have not provided sufficient returns for many small- and medium-sized farmers to maintain a viable livelihood through only farm activities. This publication examines how several operations in the West have migrated from a traditional commodity-focused business into a successful direct-marketing enterprise within the last 10 to 15 years. Declining profit margins that would not sustain their families' livelihood on the farm was the main reason that prompted these operations to consider direct-marketing and agri-tourism activities.

Even though direct marketing allows farmers to retain a much higher share of consumer food expenditures, the elements needed to make this production-marketing strategy a success are often not well understood. In part, this is because of their increased complexity as compared to commodity production-marketing systems. Albert Einstein's famous quotation that "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted," may seem all too appropriate when looking at what it takes to thrive at direct farm marketing and agri-tourism. Traditionally, commodity producers have set goals for high yields and low costs of production in order to be "low cost" producers. However, personality skills, relationships, superb quality and service, willingness to change, and general business savvy were also found to be key for the direct farm marketing and agri-tourism enterprises examined. This book is not intended to be a step-by-step guide on how to start a direct farm marketing or agri-tourism enterprise, but rather to identify the more subtle and unique factors behind the failures and successes of the enterprises examined and to determine their strategies for meeting future challenges and risks.

This publication examines 17 direct farm marketing and agri-tourism enterprises from the West and also includes introductory and summary sections. The end of each section provides contact information for the enterprises examined and for the contributing authors. The Western Extension Marketing Committee is greatly indebted to the willingness and openness of all interviewed participants to share the strategies, successes, and failures of their enterprises and what their plans are for meeting future challenges and risks.

A special thanks and acknowledgment is given to Nancy Bannister for her dedication and superb work in the technical editing, layout, and design of this publication. She did a great job of bringing consistency to the terms and writing style of 13 different authors and was persistent in getting photos that would fit the text and look attractive. Thanks are also due Joanne Littlefield for videotaping interviews of Arizona's enterprises. Finally, the Western Extension Marketing Committee would like to thank the Farm Foundation for seed money that started this project and the Western Center for Risk Management Education and USDA Risk Management Agency for providing the primary financial support that made *Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing* possible.

—Russell Tronstad

