

*Promoting today's farming innovations...  
 Ensuring tomorrow's family farms.*

## Take a peek at survey results

*The researchers at MSU have been hard at work crunching numbers, and they've shared some of the early data with us. Stay tuned for more...*

◆ Half the farms and ranches represented in the survey are less than 40 acres in size,

◆ 20% are primarily wholesalers, 65% are primarily direct sellers and 15% generate most of their income from agricultural tourism-related enterprises.

◆ 74% of farmers and ranchers who have diversified their revenue-producing enterprises have realized a positive increase in net revenues.

◆ 47% of those engaged in

direct marketing only sell at on-farm markets, 19% only at farmers' markets and 34% sell at on farm and farmers' markets.

◆ 65% do not have a business plan, yet 49% do have something they consider to be a "market plan."

◆ More than 90% operate working farms or ranches.

◆ 56% are first generation farmers and 65% expect that the next generation will take over the farm.

◆ 59% of total never attended a NAFDMA convention, 15% of NAFDMA members did not attend any NAFDMA conference in the past 5 years, roughly 50% of NAFDMA members do not attend the conference any given year.

◆ 51% are engaged in agritourism, and of that 51%, 89% offer school tours, 69% do farm animal displays, and less than 5% offer mechanical amusement rides.

This is just the tip of the information iceberg that will result from the survey conducted by Dr. Ed Mahoney and his team in the Recreation Industries Research Center at Michigan State University in partnership with NAFDMA

and with funding support from the USDA, Texas Department of Agriculture and Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. It's just a teaser. Our main interest in investing in this survey is to take a fresh look at the entire farm direct marketing and agritourism industry.

We got more than 1,000 completed responses. Believe it or not, that's an incredible number. What a great response!

### **We'll dig into data in Texas!**

Don't miss the outstanding keynote presentation by Ed Mahoney and Brent Warner in Texas, when they dig deep into the analysis and help us discover the untapped potential for our industry.

## Here's an idea...



*Arrowhead Acres, Uxbridge, Mass., clearly states what customers should do. This helps them keep cars moving through their parking lot once customers have chosen their trees.*

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2 *North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association*

# It's contest time!

## *Take a few minutes to enter the annual Members' Choice Contests.*

NAFDMA is again offering three different Members' Choice Contests in 2005. The contests are held in conjunction with the annual conference, which will be held Jan. 12-14, 2006, in Austin, Texas. Contests are open to current (2005-2006) NAFDMA members only. All contests are free to enter.

To enter, mail your newsletter, brochure or specialty brochure to NAFDMA - Contests, 62 White Loaf Rd., Southampton, MA 01073-9251. Or, drop them off at the conference registration booth by 2 p.m. on Thursday. Voting begins at 3 p.m. Thursday and ends at 3 p.m. on Friday. See below for details on entering the Web Site Contest.

### **Outstanding Newsletter Contest**

One of the fun things about an association like NAFDMA is the individuality of its members. This individuality is reflected in the variety of newsletters entered in the contest. If you don't currently publish a farm newsletter, be sure to stop by the newsletter display board to see some examples of this effective marketing tool. You may be inspired to start your own farm newsletter.

### **Outstanding Brochure Contest**

#### **Outstanding Specialty Brochure Contest**

Show off your best brochure from 2005 and pick up some new ideas from your NAFDMA colleagues. If you're looking for ways to jazz up your farm brochure, be sure to stop by the brochure display board for some ideas.

Please specify your category. Specialty brochures are targeted at a specific audience or created to promote a specific part of your farm, such as Birthday Parties, School Tours, Special Events, and Picnic/Corporate Parties. Any brochure entered without a category designation will automatically be entered in the General category.

### **Outstanding Web Site Contest**

If you think that your Web site stacks up to the best of your NAFDMA peers and want to see if they agree, then enter the contest. All voting will take place before the conference. Visit [www.nafdma.com/BackForty](http://www.nafdma.com/BackForty) between Nov. 1 and Nov. 30 to enter. A consumer panel will screen all entries, and NAFDMA members will vote on their favorite Web site between Dec. 7 and 20.

This year's entries will be part of Capturing Clicks: Best of NAFDMA Member Web Sites. Internet experts Andrew and Yongxia Skadberg will use your entries as the foundation for their presentation as they explore the whys and whats of a great Web site.

# Capitalize on customer red flags

*A flat tire. Keys locked in a car. All too often, the unexpected happens to your customers. This is a chance to generate good will and customer loyalty.*



by Al Rose, Director  
Northeast

Consumer orientation tends to get me going. So, here we go. What is consumer orientation? It's a firm-wide (farm-wide) focus on satisfying customers' ever-changing needs and wants. It's a challenge we all face. It's much easier said than done.

In principle, consumer-oriented operations add value to everything they do. They create such a wonderful shopping experience that pricing isn't an issue or a focus. This is something we strive for at my family's farm. Of the examples I could share, one in particular stands out: throwing a red flag.

A couple of years ago my family and I parked our van in a mall parking garage during the holidays. A visiting nephew and niece wanted to stop in the mall before they left town. It was snowing, and the roads and parking garage were a mess. Somehow, in the chaos of unloading kids and strollers, the

My priorities shifted to finding a helpful mall staff person to loan me a flashlight.

When I finally found someone wearing a red blazer, not only could he not be bothered, but he also insisted that I use the security phone on the second floor by the parking entrance. Off I went to find the phone. I picked up the phone and was answered with a "wait by the phone" attitude and someone should be with you in 15 minutes. I waited 20 minutes. I contemplated on how easy it was for someone to consider me a problem they had to deal with. Finally, without the support I was looking for, I headed back in the mall.

I was dissatisfied and disgusted with the experience. It had now been close to an hour of missing out in family time. I bought a flashlight in the mall and headed out to the van. Without hesitating, I grabbed a propped up garage sign and laid it under the van, found my keys and propped the sign back up.

What did I learn from this "shopping" experience? First, it's great to be on the other side. Second, I'm proud to be a farmer, and I don't need to ask mall staff for help. Third, I needed to change the way we handle parking mishaps at our business. The following year not only did all our staff hear this story, but they were also instructed to contact me when we had a parking "opportunity." Our code over the radio became, you guessed it, "Al, we have a red flag."

Of the hundreds of cars that pack in here on busy weekends,

we always get a few car troubles (lockouts, flats, etc). When this happens, these folks are having a primarily self-inflicted bad experience. And that turns out to be an incredible opportunity for the farm to add value.

Over the last two years I have personally used the tractor to pull out stuck vehicles (parked where they shouldn't have), changed a front tire on a slope, and rescued countless keys left in vehicles, all with a sense of priority in the person's predicament. Not only do you feel like a hero, but also, more important, you have just put an individual's need ahead of everything else and, without noticing it, increased the overall goodwill of your business.

In the end, we all benefit from consumer orientation. Advertising is at its greatest when it's spread by word of mouth. We've all heard that a person tells at least 10 people about a good/bad experience. Creating a great experience from what can be a crisis is a story that's easily spread. The benefits are hard to quantify, but I received several letters of appreciation and even a Carhartt gift certificate. It's difficult to prioritize other people's problems when we're busy with our own daily and never-ending problems. Sometimes we need to place ourselves in someone else's shoes to see easy ways to create value. Sometimes we just need a "hello there" reminder, a red flag thrown our way, to make sure we don't lose focus on #1, the customer.

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doors were locked with keys left inside. Good thing we have that spare set under the van. However, due to my hesitation to lay on the ground (because of that sand, salt and gray winter mess) and the lack of lighting, I could not find them.

I finally insisted for the family to head in, and I'd catch up.

# Guest expert passengers to join the Pre-Conference Bus Tours

*John, Jane and Randy will share their expertise as passengers*

Passengers on at least three of the Pre-Conference Bus Tours will have special guests on board with them this year. These guests will add another dimension to NAFDMA's school on wheels. They'll supplement your trained NAFDMA tour guides with their many years of experience in the farm direct marketing industry.

John Stanley will join the Ranches and Retail Tour.

John's retail experience covers hands-on retailing in supermarkets, hardware stores, garden centers, farmers' markets and drug stores.

Jane Eckert is another familiar face to many NAFDMA members. She will join the Catering and Corporate



Parties Tour. Jane, a former NAFDMA president, received NAFDMA's 2004 Outstanding Leadership Award. Jane grew up on her family's apple orchard near St. Louis, Mo. She combined marketing expertise gained through an executive career in corporate



marketing with her experience as vice president of her family's farm to start Eckert AgriMarketing.

Randy White, CEO and co-founder of the White Hutchinson Leisure & Learning Group, will join the Peaches, Plants and PYO Tour. He is an authority on feasibility and design/production of community-based family and children's entertainment/leisure facilities.

## Register early for a workshop

*Choose from eight different full-day workshops in Austin!*

NAFDMA's full-day workshops consistently have been highly rated through the years. Because of their popularity and the fact that they've been selling out, we now require preregistration.

Some farm direct marketers may opt to go back to the basics with Jane Eckert. Jane will be presenting Farm Direct Marketing & Agritourism 101: Make Your First Steps the Right Steps.

More advanced agritourism operators should consider

Growing Your Agritourism/ Agritainment Attraction for Success. Randy White will delve into the details to help you expand your agritourism business.

Agritourism operators may also consider Jim Cain's workshop, Teambuilding Challenges and Adventures—The Perfect Addition to Your Program.

If you've ever thought about capitalizing on your farm's natural resources, don't miss Nature Tourism with Loy Sneary and

Jed Elrod.

Farm retailers won't want to miss John Stanley's workshop, Ban Customers and Grow Your Business. John will aim to change your thinking to boost your bottom line.

No matter what type of farm you operate, you have a story to tell, whether it's to customers or newspaper reporters. Miles Phillips and Diane Breeding will teach you How to Tell Your Story.

Farmers' market sales can be

an important part of a farm's bottom line. Learn strategies for Successful Sales at Farmers' Markets with Gail Hayden.

Farmers' market associations often play a key role in a farmers' market's success. Nancy Bellows will teach participants about Strategic Planning and Board Development for Farmers' Market Managers and Organizers.

Don't wait and end up disappointed that you can't attend your workshop. Register today!

## Bakery Consultant

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[windfall@mtco.com](mailto:windfall@mtco.com)

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# So what's up for Texas, y'all?!

*Here are some nuggets to get you thinking about Texas, where the land is big and the ideas are even bigger (at least, sometimes!)*

This convention comes a full month earlier than recent NAFDMA conventions! *Act fast!*



Don't be intimidated by all the different pre-conference tour choices. Most of the stops overlap anyhow.



**That Sunset Valley Farmers' Market is pretty awesome!**

There's a pretty detailed Web site with all the information.



It's all about Discovering untapped Potential, in Texas, in your farm and market, and in yourself.



**We're goin' to... Luchenbach, Texas... made famous by Waylon, Willie and the boys...**



Photo by SACVB

**Don't forget... no, scratch that. Remember the Alamo!**

This year's awards banquet is like no other we've had. Give it a second look. Bring your dancin' boots.



There's some pretty powerful information in that there survey NAFDMA did. Don't miss the keynote speakers!



If you've got any the time to visit, Austin's Texas

History Museum is incredible.

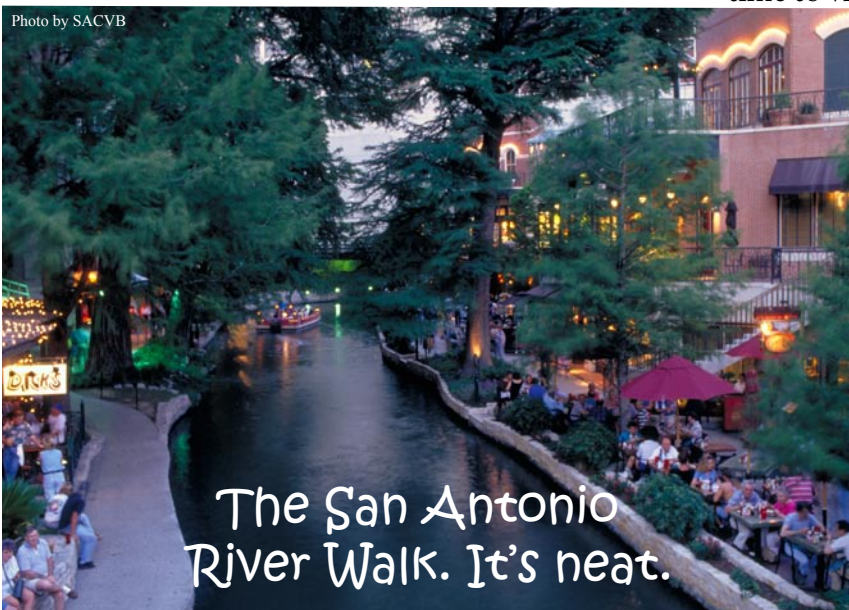


Austin's Sixth Street, you've got to go there at least once in your lifetime.

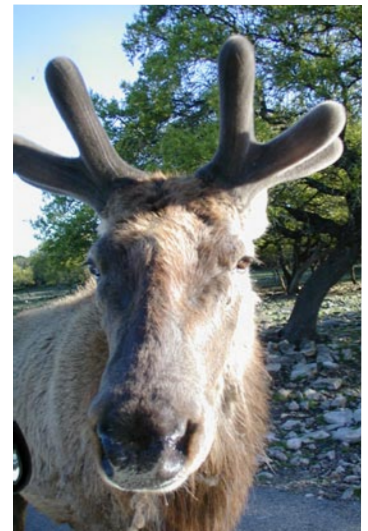


Darn it. No bats in January.

What'll it be, Shiner Bock or Lone Star?



**The San Antonio River Walk. It's neat.**



**Do you really think you know what nature tourism is?**

# musings from the president



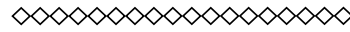
by Kay Hollabaugh  
President

OK, I admit it. I've been in the produce business for so long that I'm starting to think in terms of everything as related to a fruit or vegetable. Often on our school tours, I compare the life of a human being to the life of an apple tree. They really are quite similar you know.

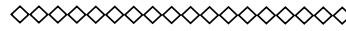
Sometimes I'll think of folks as a banana. Tough exterior, but sweet and wonderful once you get to know them. I just had an encounter this week with a – well, let's say a senior citizen – at our apple bins. The produce that comes to mind is a sour old plum or a rutabaga or a turnip found in the bottom of a crate. You get the idea.

I think being a NAFDMA member, for me at least, has been a bit like an onion. Why an onion? Since becoming a member many years ago, I have just added layer upon layer of information. At the onset, my kids were young, and I really knew very few folks. I

didn't know who to ask what. I didn't know where farms were located – were their businesses like mine? Who had issues



*"I've become just like  
a great big  
Vidalia onion."*



with teenage employees? Who carried a certain soap I was considering carrying? Where

did folks get logo-imprinted bags? Over the years between attending meetings, and logging onto the NAFDMA Web site (have you checked it out lately?? – WOW!!!), I have added layer upon layer of valuable information. And I have friends all over the country. I've become just like a great big Vidalia onion, layer upon layer, but I don't cause heartburn. Or at least I hope I don't.

See you in Texas, where I hope to put on another layer.

**You can renew your  
NAFDMA membership online**  
or using the form in the Texas program  
that was mailed to you Oct. 1.

## Call of the Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association will be held at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2006, at the Hyatt Regency Austin, Austin, Texas.

### Agenda

- 7:30 a.m. Call to Order and Welcome from the President  
President Kay Hollabaugh
- 7:32 a.m. Introduction of 2005-2006 Board of Directors  
President Kay Hollabaugh
- 7:35 a.m. Welcome to newly elected Board members for 2006-2007  
President Kay Hollabaugh
- 7:37 a.m. Secretary's Report – review of previous meeting minutes  
Secretary Brent Warner
- 7:40 a.m. Treasurer's report – review of FY2005 Year-end Financial Statement  
Treasurer Debbie Pifer
- 7:45 a.m. Executive Director's Report – review of 2005 activities  
Executive Director Charlie Touchette
- 8:00 a.m. Membership Committee Report  
Committee Chairperson Kerry Engel
- 8:10 a.m. MSU/NAFDMA Farm Direct Marketing Survey  
Executive Director Charlie Touchette and Brent Warner
- 8:20 a.m. Nominations Open for Board of Directors for 2007  
President Kay Hollabaugh and Bonnie Remlinger
- 8:25 a.m. New Business
- 8:30 a.m. Meeting Adjourn

Be an informed  
NAFDMA  
member.

Attend the  
annual meeting.

See you there!

# FMC has had a productive year

*The Farmers' Market Coalition recently debuted its Farmers' Markets Position Paper and looks forward to an incredible annual meeting in January*



by Randii MacNear,  
Chairperson

Farmers' Market Coalition

The Farmers' Market Coalition is prepared to cap a busy year with its annual meeting on Jan. 13.

This up-and-coming group is becoming increasingly visible in the farmers' market community.

The end of October saw us enter the national scene with our first FMC Policy Summit. More than 75 people were on hand to discuss issues and identify commonalities critical to farmers' markets throughout North America. Many people said that the summit was beyond their expectations.

At the summit, we rolled out our first policy position paper. You can read it online. (See the box at the bottom of this page for the Web address.)

During the summit, Kate Coler, deputy undersecretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, USDA, had

on-target discussions about farmers' markets. She said that they should be a central piece in initiatives about childhood and adult obesity and other issues across the United States. She said that farmers' markets should be a pivotal partner, and she'd try to include farmers' markets into the mix in future initiatives.

## Annual meeting in January

I hope that you'll join us at our upcoming annual meeting. We listened to your needs and concerns at last year's annual meeting. We acted on many of them. The annual meeting is our chance to check in with

you and move along our dialog together.

## Council vacancies

We have a number of FMC Council positions that will be vacant in January. Our nominating committee would love to hear from you. We'll vote on our new slate of council members at the annual meeting.

Please e-mail me if you'd like to become part of the FMC Council. As a fast-growing, fledgling group, we're faced with many challenges. If you'd like to help shape FMC, this is a great chance for you to get involved.

## Call of the FMC Annual Meeting

The 2006 Farmers' Market Coalition annual meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency Austin, Austin, Texas, at 3 p.m. on Jan. 13, 2006, immediately after the FMC workshops, which run from 9 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

### Agenda

- 3:00 p.m. Call to Order and Welcome from the FMC Council Chair - Randii MacNear
- 3:05 p.m. Introduction of FMC Council - Randii MacNear
- 3:10 p.m. Introduction of Attendees - Facilitated by FMC Council Chair Randii MacNear
- 3:30 p.m. Farmers' Market Coalition Business – FMC Council Chair Randii MacNear
  - ❖ Secretary's Report
  - ❖ Treasurer's Report
  - ❖ Nomination and Election of new FMC Council members
  - ❖ Certificates of Appreciation for outgoing FMC Council members
- 3:50 p.m. FMC in Review and Beyond
- 4:05 p.m. FMC Policy Discussion: Richard McCarthy will moderate a discussion that will include some time for break out groups and presentations from FMC Council members. We will seek to answer these two questions related to Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Farmers' Market Promotion Program and Electronic Benefits Transfer:
  - ❖ What is the most important issue related to that program?
  - ❖ What is the best way to make that program better?
- 5:45 p.m. Calendar for upcoming events/activities
  - ❖ Conference sessions
  - ❖ 2007 Convention in Alberta
  - ❖ Workshops
- 5:55 p.m. Closing remarks: Looking to the future
- 6:00 p.m. FMC Reception

Read the FMC Policy Paper at  
[www.nafdma.com/files/FMC\\_SummitPaper.pdf](http://www.nafdma.com/files/FMC_SummitPaper.pdf)



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Southampton MA 01073

## Send us your comments!

As NAFDMA evolves, so do the newsletter and Web site. Let us know how we're doing!!

# Calendar

### Nov. 16-17, Washington

Pacific Northwest Vegetable Association Annual Conference and Trade Show, Red Lion Hotel, Pasco, Wash.

For details, call 509-585-5460 or visit [www.pnva.org](http://www.pnva.org).

### Dec. 8, Michigan

**Farmers' Market Coalition Regional Workshop** at the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farmers' Market Expo, Grand Rapids, Mich. Co-sponsored by Cooperative Extension, Sustainable Food and Farming Systems, Michigan State University. Topics include EBT, state association development, setting up a new market, identifying and recruiting farmers to participate.

Contact: Ed Maltby or Nora Owens at [fmc@nafdma.com](mailto:fmc@nafdma.com)

or 413-529-0386 ext. 14. Visit [www.nafdma.com/FMC](http://www.nafdma.com/FMC).

### Dec. 8-10, Indiana

Food As Medicine, Farm as Healer: The 2005 Acres U.S.A. Conference, Adam's Mark Airport Hotel, Indianapolis, Ind.

For details, visit [www.acresusa.com/events/events.htm](http://www.acresusa.com/events/events.htm)

### December 8-10, 2005 • Main Conference Dec. 13-15, New Hampshire

New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference, Radisson Hotel, Manchester, N.H. For details, visit [www.nevbc.org](http://www.nevbc.org).

### Jan. 8-10, Wisconsin

Wisconsin Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Conference, Olympia Resort, Oconomowoc, Wis.

Contact: Anna Maenner,

920-478-3852 or e-mail [info@wisconsinfreshproduce.org](mailto:info@wisconsinfreshproduce.org).

### Jan. 12-14, Texas

**North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show**, Hyatt Regency, Austin, Texas. In addition to educational sessions, outstanding speakers and a diverse trade show, the conference offers a three-day pre-conference bus tour, a day of workshops, and a two-day post-conference bus tour. The entire convention runs from Jan. 9 to Jan. 16.

For information, visit the Web site at [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com), e-mail [info@nafdma.com](mailto:info@nafdma.com), or call 413-529-0386. Early registration discount ends Dec. 6.

### Jan. 19-22, Kentucky

Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms

Conference, Hyatt Regency, Louisville, Ky.

Contact Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group at [ssawg\\_conf@bell-south.net](mailto:ssawg_conf@bell-south.net) or visit [www.ssawg.org](http://www.ssawg.org).

### Feb. 3, Idaho

**Farmers' Market Coalition Regional Workshop**, Basque Cultural Center, Boise, Idaho. Partners are Rural Roots, University of Idaho Small Farms Program, Capital City Public Market, Northwest Coalition for Pesticides, Land Trust of Treasure Valley, Idaho Smart Growth.

For details, visit [www.nafdma.com/FMC](http://www.nafdma.com/FMC), e-mail [fmc@nafdma.com](mailto:fmc@nafdma.com), or contact Ed Maltby or Nora Owens at 413-529-0386 ext. 14.