



Market Connection

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

The McAfees take top honors

Indiana farm market receives top farm direct marketing award

In the Northwest corner of Indiana, two people “made something out of nothing,” to quote one of their customers. David and Bonnie McAfee, who own County Line Orchards, Hobart, Ind., were honored in January when they were named Outstanding Farm Marketers of the Year by the North American Farmers’ Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA). The McAfees were honored at the association’s annual conference, which was held in January 2006 in

Austin, Texas.

The McAfees are proud to receive this award, and they attribute part of their success to their “orchard family” (staff that returns year after year). As David is often heard saying, “We got something worth doing here.”

The sharing of information and resources within NAFDMA is outstanding. NAFDMA is a wonderful asset for the small family farmer. They understand that all of our hearts are in our farms; it’s not just

a business, say the McAfees. “NAFDMA has been the equivalent of a PhD in farm marketing,” says David.

David and Bonnie started planting apple trees in 1988. They had nothing to market and no place to market it from until 1992, when they built their main building and the trees began bearing fruit.

In 1993, with little to sell, and few customers to sell to,

someone called asking if they did school tours. “Why not?”

Continued on page 2



Here’s an idea...



The wines at Das Peach Haus in Fredericksburg, Texas, are beautifully displayed on simple shelves above the rack of bottles.

contents

A fresh perspective on retailing	3
Farm Market of the Year finalists.....	4
Members’ Choice Contest winners	5
Musings from the president	6
Hall of Fame honoree.....	6
Farmers’ Market Manager of the Year	7
Calendar of events.....	8

NAFDMA board & staff

President: Rob Leeds, Delaware, OH
740-833-2030; leeds.2@osu.edu

Vice President: Mary Vollmer, Bunn, NC
919-496-3076; mary@vollmerfarm.com

Vice President: Kerry Engel, Westlock, AB
780-349-4466 ext. 2; kerry.engel@gov.ab.ca

Secretary: Stuart Beare, Crawley, UK
011-44-1342-718472; stuart@tulleyfarm.com

Treasurer: Debbie Pifer, Canfield, OH
330-533-4161; dpifer3290@aol.com

Canada East: Mark Saunders, Munster, ON
613-838-5440; mark@saundersfarm.com

Midwest: Dede Beck, St. Johns, MI
989-224-3686; cider@ujcidermill.com

Northeast: Al Rose, Phillipston, MA
978-249-6763; al@redapplefarm.com

Northeast: Sue Roba, Dalton, PA
570-563-2904; robatree@epix.net

Northwest: Jan Vala, Gretna, NE
402-332-4200; janvala@novia.net

Northwest: Bonnie Remlinger, Carnation, WA
425-333-4135; bmr@remlingerfarms.com

Southeast: Chalmers Mikell, Columbia, SC
803-936-4288; cmikell@safb.com

Southwest: Randii MacNear, Davis, CA
530-756-1695; rmacnear@dcn.org

Southwest: Anne Holcomb, Willcox, AZ
520-384-2084; apples@appleannies.com

Executive Director: Charlie Touchette, Southampton, MA
413-529-0386; nafdma@map.com

White Loaf Ridge Management Co. (Office Staff)

Membership Director: Virginia Schwarzenbach
413-529-0386; Virginia@WhiteLoafRidge.com

Communications Director: Kelly Fuerstenberg
413-529-0386; Kelly@WhiteLoafRidge.com

Farmers' Market Coalition Coordinators: 413-529-0386;
fmc@nafdma.com

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association

62 White Loaf Rd., Southampton, MA 01073
Toll-free: 888-884-9270; info@nafdma.com

© 2006 North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association.
All rights reserved. Reproduction with permission only.

From a tour host

Some kind words from one of our tour stop hosts in Texas

Six out of the seven buses that were on the pre-conference bus tour had a delightful lunch at The Farm Country Club in Bandera, Texas. Our hosts were Homer and Kathy Stevens. Homer shared some of their thoughts with us in a letter recently.

"Kathy and I cannot say enough about how privileged we feel to have been selected to host the Monday noon meal for your group. We felt like we were getting ready for the most stringent drill instructors' inspection from the beginning, and after reading the business and professional credentials of the participants, we realized even more vividly that those concerns were merited. This was certainly a special group. ... We will display our plaque proudly."

Homer went on to write that he and Kathy "will be willing to answer any questions that members may have regarding recipes, equipment, or procedures. ... We are so glad to know of this wonderful organization and intent to tell others about it.

"Thank you! Thank you for everything!"

To Homer and Kathy, we say "Thank YOU!" for your outstanding hospitality, your willingness to share and for the best barbecue of the entire convention!

County Line

Continued from front page

they thought. "We needed to sell something to someone!" That year, 4,000 students, teachers and chaperones visited the farm, and the number increased every year. Almost 38,000 people visited the farm in 2005. They are open only in September and October, so all of those tours occurred during those two months.

Through the years, they added pumpkins and animals. The animals are now in the Kid's Farm. They have several NAFDMA-inspired creations on the farm, including Peter, the pumpkin-eating dinosaur, and the Golden Goat Bridge. They also offer an 8-acre corn MAiZE™, two haunted attractions, campfires and hayrides along with many other family activities. They also host weddings and other celebrations.

In the words of David and Bonnie McAfee, their story is one of "how two people with average jobs, a vision and minimal capital turned 35 acres of corn and soybean land, renting for \$75 per acre in 1987, into County Line Orchard, an enterprise that employs 300 people during the season and grossed about \$1.5 million in 2005. It's been fun for our customers, our employees and us as owners. We firmly believe that what we do is worth the doing."

Learn more about County Line Orchard at www.countyline-orchard.com.

A fresh perspective on retailing

Add a retailing expert from Down Under into the mix of a bus full of farm market retailers in Texas and you have one heck of a learning experience.



by Kerry Engel, Director
Canada West

Let's face it, NAFDMA members are known for their innovation. They know how to capture creative ideas, how to mold and modify them and to how make ideas their own. That's exactly what over 80 members did this past January in Texas on the NAFDMA Retailing Tour.

The goal of the Retailing Tour this year was to highlight best management practices from some of the top retailers in Texas. From barbecue sauce to shoes, we were inundated with merchandising know-how. Throw retailing expert, John Stanley into the mix and we were fixed to have one heck of a learning experience.

Learning from others...where do you begin? The hardest



A back-lit tasting station at Das Peach Haus also caught John's attention.

hurdle for us to overcome was to look at each establishment from a business perspective—not as shoppers.

John coached us on what to look for when touring a retail facility.

Pay careful attention to and record your thoughts on:

- ◆ First impressions
- ◆ Merchandising
- ◆ Branding
- ◆ Signage
- ◆ Customer Flow – counter clock wise flow (in North America)

◆ What is their toilet paper? That's the product that people regularly return for. Is it in the back?

- ◆ Category management
- ◆ Average sale per customer. John feels \$25 per person is good for on-farm marketers.
- ◆ Sales per square foot. Count where the public goes, in the aisles, where they shop, not storage or production area.

Self Assessment.

On our three-day Texas journey, bus goers also had

the chance to discuss shrinkage, stock turns and the role of a buyer. John shared with us that 60 percent of shrink is staff related. Do you know where your losses occur?

When we visited retailers

with huge amounts of inventory on clearance John became concerned about 'stock turns.' He felt that staff is not promoting product enough if product is not turning. John believes that the buyer has the most difficult job in a retail environment. If too much product is left over,



Above: Cross merchandising at Cabella's. Right: Bedding plants in a bed at Fredericksburg Herb Farm. Using fake facades on buildings creates a farm atmosphere.

your buyer isn't doing a good job. You don't want product that hangs around.

How do you decide what products to carry?

◆ Products are fashion related. Read fashion magazines. Create a storyboard using magazine pictures that describes what your customers are doing and the colors and products they see. Build your displays around what customers are reading.

◆ Watch color trends. Look to the paint industry. They are leading the color trend and are three to five years ahead of the rest of the industry.

◆ Put the new Trader Joe's book, *The Trader Joe's Adventure: Turning a Unique Approach to Business into a Retail and Cultural Phenomenon*, on your reading list.

What fun ideas did we take home?

- ◆ Have a place for the hunters (men) to sit while the women gather!
- ◆ Use music and building facades to add to the experience.
- ◆ Place bedding plants in a bed.
- ◆ Cross merchandise.



More about color

If you're keeping an eye on color trends, John Stanley recommends following Plascon and Pantone.

The Plascon Palette of 2006 is made up of four distinct themes: Humbled, Enticed, Intrigued and Settled. Visit www.plascon.co.za.

In the fall, Pantone offers up its predictions for hot spring colors. It also offers for sale a book, *Colors for your every mood*, which includes "fascinating psychological insights for everyone who makes color decisions." Visit www.pantone.com.

Two farms honored as finalists for Farm Market of the Year

Tanners Orchard and White House Fruit Farm joined County Line Orchard as finalists for the 2005 Farm Market of the Year award.

Tanners Orchard

Tanners Orchard, Speer, Ill., was named a finalist for NAFDMA's Farm Market of the Year award. Richard and Marilyn Tanner were joined at the podium with their daughter and son in law, Jennifer and Ben Beaver. Several staff from Tanners Orchard were also on hand to share in the honors.

Tanners Orchard traces its farming roots all the way back to Switzerland. In 1906, Rudolph departed for the "New World" and ended up in Deer Creek, Illinois. Eventually, Rudolph's son John took over farm and moved the apple orchard for better ground. The new farm had 20 acres of established apple trees and was at the intersection of two highways. John's two sons returned to the farm after they graduated and then served in the military, and in 1976, they began buying the orchard from their father. By 1990, the partnership had

become a corporation.

In 2002, one brother and two of his children bought out the other brother. The original apple orchard had expanded through the years to include pumpkins, squash, gourds and chrysanthemums. School tours bring in busloads of kids. The farm has a unique playground, u-pick apples and pumpkins, barnyard animals, and a two-story tree house for the goats.

The bakery turns out an incredible assortment of items, including pies, donuts, muffins, strudels and breads. They also offer a lunch menu, caramel apples and a fudge kitchen. The gifts department grows every year, and a recently purchased Point of Sale system now tracks sales and inventory. The number of farm employees has grown from 18 in 1968 to 102 today.

"We strive to make each customer feel as if this is their orchard," say the Tanners. "We feel we have created a founda-

tion for an extraordinary farm visit, lasting memories and wonderful family traditions. Hard work and the blessings of God are indeed very sweet fruit."

To learn more about Tanners Orchard, visit www.tannersorchard.com.

White House Fruit Farm

For the second year in a row, White House Fruit Farm Inc., Canfield, Ohio, was honored as a finalist for the NAFDMA Outstanding Farm Market of the Year.

The farm has been in the family since the early 1800s. Five generations after the family first began farming, a descendant, Jerome Hull, purchased 100 acres of the home farm from his uncle.

Jerome and his wife planted the farm's first apple and peach trees in 1924. In the 1960s, Jerome passed controlling interest to his son David, the only child to remain on the farm. David and his wife concentrated on fruits and vegetables. In the 1970s, David began attending Ohio Roadside Marketing Conferences and then, to pursue a different farm business model, renovated the 1881 bank barn to house a year-round retail market.

The 1980s brought still more changes to the farm. Two of David's children returned to the farm and took on different responsibilities that lead to increased fruit production, a growing farm market and vegetable production. The farm



now includes 30 acres of apples, 10 of peaches and nectarines, 5 of strawberries, 3 of blueberries and 30 of various vegetables. Customers can pick their own strawberries, peppers and tomatoes.

By 1990, White House Fruit Farm was a year-round retail market with a diverse product mix. Other family members joined in various roles. The latest major addition opened in January 2005. The market, which was 3,200 square feet in 1978 is now 12,000 square feet. In the fall, the family offers school tours, senior tours, a craft show and harvest festival, petting zoo, and horse-drawn wagon rides on weekends.

"Our family hopes to leave a farming legacy to our community and future generations of which we can be proud," says Pifer. "We will continue to be a working farm that young people can learn from and enjoy visiting."

Visit www.whitehousefruitfarm.com to learn more about the farm.



NAFDMA members vote for their favorite publications, Web site

Winners claim their prizes in annual Members' Choice contests

Outstanding Brochure

NAFDMA members chose a brochure by Roba's Family Farms, Dalton, Pa., as their favorite. The farm is owned by John and Sue Roba, who operate the farm along with their children.

"John and I feel that NAFDMA has been very influential for networking and generating new ideas for the farm," says Sue.

Roba's Family Farms began in 1984, when John Roba purchased a 52-acre retired dairy farm. Through the years, John and Sue planted trees and the farm grew to 100 acres. They also diversified the farm to offer plenty of family fun in the fall and winter. Farm activities include campfires, a corn maze, pig races, Bunnyville, a chicken show and the Kiddie Kattle Train. The farm hosts school tours and scout/youth groups as well as birthday parties.

Learn more at www.roba-familyfarms.com.

Outstanding Specialty Brochure

Farm direct marketers

submitted a variety of their 2005 specialty brochures to the Outstanding Specialty Brochure Contest.

When the voting was done, a coloring book by Carolyn's Country Cousins, Liberty, Mo., was declared the favorite. The farm is owned by Carolyn and Buddy Raasch.

This year, the category went far beyond traditional brochures and included rack cards and even a door hanger in addition to the winning educational coloring book.

Carolyn and Buddy opened the farm to the public in 1991 with a corner of the white barn and a garden patch of pumpkins. Last fall, they hosted approximately 15,000 visitors for educational tours, grew 50 acres of pumpkins and offered a play

yard, pond and train with a half-mile track. The train is a replica of the 1863 C.P. Huntington train.

Learn more at www.carolynscountrycousins.com.

Outstanding Newsletter

The Tanner family won the Outstanding Newsletter con-

test, which was part of NAFDMA's Members' Choice Awards. Richard and Marilyn Tanner were joined at the podium with their daughter and son in law, Jennifer and Ben Beaver.

Continued on page 7



Above: The Robas; Above right: Carolyn Raasch and Gieselle Fest; Right: The Tanners [from left: Ben and Jennifer Beaver, Richard and Marilyn Tanner and Joy Grose (front)]



Add A Huge Profit Potential To Your Farm

Tanners Orchard Caramel Event!

2 sessions
April 4
or
June 6

Stay the day and learn how to make GREAT caramel from scratch

During Your Day Visit You Will Receive

- Tanners Recipes for caramel apples, sauce and candy
- **Instructions** to make Tanners **GREAT** caramel
- **Ideas** to use your caramel in ALL your baking
- **Resources** for all the equipment & ingredients

For Reservations Call by

March 15 for the April 4 session
May 15 for the June 6 session

Tanners Orchard
309-493-5442

740 State Rt 40, Speer, IL 61479

Sessions are \$500 per business • Lunches Are Provided • Ask about Hotel Accommodations

musings from the president



by Rob Leeds
President

This year at the 2006 NAFDMA conference, I was involved in some interesting discussions about branding your product. A great bonus of the conference is how you learn just as much between sessions as in them. Like most conversations, this one took off on several tangents, landing on branding a farm with characters. After much discussion, the bottom line seemed to be the array of characters is only limited by your imagination.

Product characters have

been around for years. Several NAFDMA members have been very successful in developing characters. In Ohio, Patterson's Farm has Johnny Appleseed. Down in North Carolina, Vollmer Farm has the Pumpkin Princess, and don't forget the Saunder's Farm royalty, the Green Queen.

In the corporate world there are many examples of characters that have helped a company relate an image to the public. One of the oldest is the Quaker Oats Man. Even though the character was not cute or cuddly, he did a great job of developing an image that was true to the core identity of the Quaker Oats brand. When this character was created in the 1900s, he related a simple, honest product. Customers believed that this gentleman would never sell them an unwholesome breakfast. Judg-

ing from his popularity today, people still think he stands for a simple, wholesome way to start the morning.

There are many other examples of characters that have struck a cord with the company's target customers. In 2004 Ad Age conducted a survey to find readers' favorite characters. First place was the M&M characters, followed by

"The key to a great character

seems to be relating your core identity to the customer."

the Aflac Duck and Mr. Peanut. Looking at these three as a test group, it is very difficult to find similarities between the three. Some have humor, some have style. Some are the product, some have no product connection. Some are cute, some are classic. Perhaps what they have in common is that they all relate to customers and ring true to the core identity of the company.

Not all company characters have stood the test of time. An example might be the dog that pitched for Taco Bell. Apparently customers could not make the connection between a cute Chihuahua and fast food.

The key to great characters seems to be relating your core identity to the customer. At Leeds' Farm, we are all about the simple life, getting back to the farm, leaving the city behind.... I guess I could develop some of the Green Acres clan into Leeds' Farm characters. They should relate to the baby boom parents and grandparents. Hank Kimble, the County Agent, has always been a favorite of mine. On second thought, maybe not.

Have a great time this winter reflecting on the ideas you gained at this year's conference and as always keep in touch. If you have NAFDMA ideas, conference suggestions, or want to share a good farm character, my e-mail is leeds.2@osu.edu.

Karen Watt joins Hall of Fame

Although she couldn't attend the ceremony in person, Karen Watt was on the telephone while a friend and former colleague, Brent Warner, announced that she was being inducted into the NAFDMA Hall of Fame.

Watt and her husband, Chris, own and operate Watt Farms Country Market in Albion, N.Y. They began farming in 1980. In 1986, they began retailing their fruit from a \$50 used tent and at three farmers' markets. In 1989, the Watts built the retail market and apple storage facility. The farm has diversified through the years. The Watts now sell a variety of fruit, ice cream, gifts and homemade fudge at the market.

They also offer train rides and educational school tours. The Watts grow 250 acres of fruit, which they sell at the retail market and at six farmers' markets in season.

Watt served two terms on the NAFDMA board of directors, and she also served as president from 1999 to 2001.

"NAFDMA was and still is very important to me," she says. "I know that I can pick up the phone or e-mail any one of the members and get their expertise on a whole variety of issues.



Of all the memberships I have, the networking advantages and creativity among the individuals in this association are unlike any other. While we all have problems similar to other retail businesses, we also have such unique opportunities

that will never be duplicated by the likes of Wal-Mart and McDonald's. This membership is the best and has directly changed the way we live and work! Our Watt's Orchard Express Train, fall school programs, and so much more have been the direct result of our membership and involvement

in NAFDMA."

Watt's involvement in the farming community extends far beyond NAFDMA. She is active in the New York Farm Bureau on the Fruit Advisory Committee. Previously she was on the state NYFB board from 2000 through 2004. She's active in the Lake Plains RC&D Council and the Oak Orchard Health Center Board of Directors. In December 2005, she was reappointed for two more years to the National Advisory Council on Migrant Health under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration.

Learn more at www.watt-farms.com.

Pamela Boyar honored as Farmers' Market Manager of the Year

Austin market manager wins top farmers' market award

Pamela Boyar, director of the Sunset Valley Farmers Market in Austin, Texas, was named Farmers' Market Manager of the Year at the annual conference of the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA). The conference was held in January 2006 in Austin, Texas.

Boyar's foray into the farmers' market world began in 1997, when she started a small 12-vendor farmers' market in the People's Pharmacy parking lot in Westlake. The market quickly outgrew the space. She moved the market to the parking lot of the Westlake High



School Annex, and in late 2004 she moved again to the market's current location at the Toney Burger Center in South Austin. The move brought with it a name change to Sunset Valley Farmers Market.

Boyar's commitment to the market and to her vendors has led to the market being the highest grossing grower-only farmers' market in Texas. The market has around 100 booths and between 70 and 120 vendors. Each month, Boyar's market features a festival or special activities.

The market's lively atmosphere and a diverse, high-quality mix of vendors attracts a growing number of visitors every Saturday throughout the year.

Boyar has been dedicated to the farm community, particularly organic farmers, for more than 25 years. Back in 1980, she started a fresh-pressed juice company, and in 1986 she began distributing organically grown produce directly from farmers to restaurants in California.

To learn more about Sunset Valley Farmers Market, visit www.sunsetvalleyfarmersmarket.org.

Members' Choice winners

Continued from page 5

Outstanding Web Site

After more than 40 entries and three rounds of judging, Cagle's Dairy of Canton, Ga., was voted the winner of the Outstanding Web Site Contest.

All voting took place before the conference. Like the other Members' Choice contests, the Web Contest is an important learning opportunity. Cagle's Dairy's Web site, www.caglesdairy.com, was featured during a conference session called "Capturing Clicks: The Best

of NAFDMA Member Web Sites."

"Because the award is given out by our peers, we're delighted to accept this prestigious honor," says Mark Cagle. "We spend many hours along with our Web designer, SRStudios, to have a top-quality, user-friendly Web site. The success of our efforts is proven each month with the number of hits our site receives, which included 1.8 million in October 2005 alone."

Cagle's Dairy traces its origins back to 1951. The farm

is today owned and operated by the third generation of the Cagle family, Mark and Kelly Cagle, with assistance from Mark's brother, Scott Cagle. Their parents, Bernese and Albert Cagle, recently retired and sold the farm to Mark and Kelly.



The Cagle family, from left: Albert, Bernese, Scott, Mark and Kelly

markets. In addition, the family hosts birthday parties, family reunions and other events on the farm.

The farm offers a variety of fun experiences, including a corn maze, garden tours in Papa Albert's Garden, pig races in Squealer Field, and two farm

Learn more about Cagle's Dairy and view their award-winning Web site at www.caglesdairy.com.

Do you need to renew your membership?

Yes, *IF* we have included a renewal invoice in this newsletter. Use this form, or go to www.nafdma.com and click on Join NAFDMA.



62 White Loaf Rd.
Southampton MA 01073

Send us your
comments!

Calendar

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, e-mail fmc@nafdma.com, or contact Ed Maltby or Nora Owens at 413-529-0386 ext. 14.

Feb. 10, Georgia

Farmers' Market Coalition Regional Workshop, Albany, Ga. Co-sponsored by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/LAF. The workshop will focus on issues related to

minority farmers, rural farmers' markets, and southern farmers' markets' organizations (or the lack thereof).

For details, visit www.nafdma.com/FMC, e-mail fmc@nafdma.com, or contact Ed Maltby or Nora Owens at 413-529-0386 ext. 14.

Feb. 22-25, Pennsylvania

Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show, Sheraton Reading Hotel, Reading, Pa.

Contact: John Berry, 610-391-9840, jwb15@psu.edu or visit www.MADMC.com.

Feb. 24, Kansas

"Plan to Grow" Farmers' Market Conference, Sedgwick County Extension Education Center, Wichita, Kan.

Contact: Jerry Jost, 785-766-0428 or jjost@myvine.com

Feb. 25, North Carolina

Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference, Warren Wilson College Swannanoa, N.C. Pre-register by Feb. 18.

Visit www.asapconnections.org or e-mail peter@asapconnections.org.

Feb. 25-27, Iowa

Iowa Farmers' Market Manager-Organizer Workshop, Des Moines, Iowa.

Contact: Barbara Lovitt, 515-281-8232.

Feb. 26-March 1, Pennsylvania

International Fruit Tree Association 49th Annual Conference, Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, Hershey, Pa.

Visit www.idfta.org or call 509-665-3812.

March 14, Minnesota

Minnesota Grown Marketing Conference, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn.

Visit www.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown/conference.htm

March 2-4, Colorado

Colorado Big and Small Conference & Trade Show, Exhibition Center, Island Grove Park, Greeley, Colo.

Visit www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/Adams/events/pdf/ColoAgBigandSmall.pdf.

April 4, Illinois

Tanners Orchard Caramel Event, Tanners Orchard, Speer, Ill. Call 309-493-5442. Register by March 15.