

A. Description of the Organizations

The **Southwest Marketing Network** (SWMN) was initiated to increase regional marketing expertise and opportunities for farmers and ranchers in the Four Corners states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. The Network brings together projects already "on the ground," their sponsors, and participants to learn together, especially from successful projects and programs within region, and points to resources available to help with marketing and business planning. Our goal is to ensure that new, existing, and prospective Southwest producers - especially small-scale, alternative, and minority producers - have the connections with others, technical and financial assistance, marketing information, business and marketing skills, and peer examples to improve their marketing success, viability, and bottom line.

The mission of **Farm to Table** is to promote locally based agriculture through education, community outreach and networking. Farm to Table enhances marketing opportunities for farmers; encourages family farming, farmers' markets and the preservation of agricultural traditions; influences public policy; and, furthers understanding of the links between farming, food, health and local economies. Farm to Table was a founder of the SWMN and is one of its key partners. Farm to Table also coordinates the **New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council** (NMFAPC), a democratically-based organization that brings together individuals and representatives of organizations and agencies to discuss, educate and advocate for policies that increase access to healthy foods for all New Mexicans and that promote the local farming and ranching economies. Farm to Table has also developed a number of **Farm to School** programs. We work closely with the NM Department of Agriculture to connect farmers and school food service directors in order to get locally grown produce into New Mexico school lunches, snack programs and fundraisers. Farm to Table is a Regional Lead Agency in the National Farm to School Network in partnership with the Community Food Security Coalition and Occidental College.

B. Regional Priorities:

Together, the SWMN and Farm to Table have a keen understanding of the needs and priorities of food system stakeholders throughout the four corners states and tribal communities. We are committed to further developing collaborations around the following priorities:

- **Food Gap Task Force:** Farm to Table and the NMFAPC introduced legislation that enacted the NM Food Gap Task Force which was appointed by Gov. Richardson in 2008. The Task Force was initiated to develop criteria and funding mechanisms to address access to healthy, affordably and culturally appropriate foods in rural and underserved communities. Work areas include infrastructure, distribution, energy efficiency and health education. This is hoped to serve as a model for other communities in the southwest.
- **Distribution:** Many producers in the Southwest face long distances to urban centers and many rural communities are not on regular distribution routes. There are some innovative projects being undertaken in the region to connect farmers and consumers and to get healthy foods to rural communities—including projects aimed at farmers selling to schools and a warehouse with distribution that focuses on the New Mexico foodshed—however, work needs to be done to support, further develop and spread these models.
- **Farm to School:** With the help of the SWMN, over 200 farmers in NM, AZ and CO are selling to schools, providing farmers with a steady market and children with a healthy diet. The success of these projects has created significant unmet demand in all four states for

- training and technical assistance to develop Farm to School projects.
- **Policy:** Stakeholders are increasingly recognizing the importance of local, state and federal policy to the regional food system. For four years, the SWMN has been operating the SW Policy Outpost to coordinate policy efforts in the four states, several of which have at least one statewide or local policy council.
 - **Infrastructure:** Much of the Southwest lacks processing infrastructure that is accessible and affordable to producers focused on local markets. Some producers have formed cooperatives or other organizations to collectively build storage/processing facilities, such as the NM Apple Council. Technical assistance and financial resources are needed to spread these models.
 - **Farmers' Markets and Farmers' Market Health Programs:** The Southwest has seen a rapid expansion of farmers markets over the past few years, particularly in rural and tribal communities. Farm to Table and the SWMN and other partners have played a key role in providing technical assistance and training to interested communities and will continue to work to coordinate farmers' market development and policy work for programs that help provide access for those most in need of fresh, local foods.
 - **Meat and Livestock Marketing:** Much of the open land in the Southwest is arid and only suitable for livestock grazing and there is a rich ranching culture in all four states. While there is a growing awareness and demand for organic and grass-fed meat, most producers are selling on the commodity market at little or no profit. Work needs to be done to develop processing and direct-marketing options for small-scale ranchers.
 - **Health and Food Security:** New Mexico is the most food insecure state in the nation and poverty and access to healthy food is a significant problem for many communities throughout the region, especially in rural areas. A number of groups in each state are working to improve healthy food access through policy and private initiatives including farmers market senior nutrition programs and EBT outreach. More work needs to be done to tie these efforts to work on distribution, Farm to School and policy development.
 - **New Farmers:** The Southwest is losing many farmers, but a number of initiatives are helping to develop new farmers, including a mentoring program in Colorado and youth farming and community gardening initiatives throughout the region. As was evidenced at the youth/beginning farmer sessions at the 2008 SWMN conference, these efforts benefit from sharing experience and collaborating to build resources and support.
 - **Tribal Initiatives and Native Foods:** The Southwest is home to many tribal and traditional communities, each with a unique cuisine and agricultural heritage. There is growing momentum in tribal communities to revive agriculture and Farm to Table and the SWMN have worked closely with many groups to build and develop farming and gardening programs for local consumption and sales in the region.
 - **Organics/Sustainable Agriculture:** the SWMN and Colorado State University recently surveyed all the certified organic producers in the Four Corners states. The survey indicated the need for a) research on distribution and processing within the Four Corners states, b) a regional meeting on organic marketing and distribution opportunities, and c) policy improvements to foster more organic production and marketing in the region.
 - **Climate Change, Energy and Food Systems:** the Southwest is already experiencing the consequences of climate change and rising energy costs and producers need assistance in proactively planning for these changes. The SWMN has begun to do this with its "Climate Change, Energy, and Food Systems" project which works with producers, marketers, and communities in our region to consider climate impacts and energy costs in their planning of

local and regional distribution systems. Farm to Table and the NMFAPC will also address this through their Food Gap Task Force work.

C. Work Plan

The Wallace Center grant would allow Farm to Table and the SWMN to deepen and expand their efforts around all of the priorities listed above. One of the key goals of the Network has been to bring producers, community groups and other stakeholders together to learn from each other and develop collaborative and synergistic programs. We have four key strategies to accomplish this:

1. Continually reach out to and help to develop lasting connections among producers, producer groups, Extension, retailers, consumer and community organizations, local and state governmental entities and other food system stakeholders in the region.
2. Offer needed training in business and organizational development, alternative marketing, and capacity building in entrepreneurship and leadership and asset development (both financial and social) to Southwest producers and community organizations— especially underserved small-scale, alternative, and minority producers and rural communities.
3. Help to develop innovative projects in marketing, distribution, infrastructure, food access, and policy development and create forums where successful projects can serve as models to other communities in the region, illustrating approaches, methods, risks and rewards.
4. Develop a strong base of knowledge to support local food system development efforts in the Southwest and ensure ready and equitable access for all to this knowledge through websites, newsletters and other publications (in addition to conferences and trainings).

Proposed Activities [timeline included in brackets]

- *Establishment and coordination of Regional Steering Committee*: [RSC est. by 9-08]. We will host ongoing conference calls [three by 12-08] in which we will identify common “good food priorities”, share information and plan the SW Good Food Planning Meeting.
- *SW Good Food Planning Meeting and SWMN Conference* [May 2009]: We will organize an all-day planning meeting the day before the SWMN Conference begins to develop ideas for regional coordination on good food systems. At the conference we will host at least three sessions each on marketing, distribution, organizational development and policy.
- *Training, Outreach and Networking*[ongoing]: State coordinators will convene at least two statewide meetings and calls with partners to address collaboration on the priorities above (with guidance from SWMN/FTT). We will also obtain and distribute information and resources from and to established partners as well as reach out to new producers, organizations and communities to attend trainings and networking opportunities.
- *Website and Newsletter*[ongoing]: Farm to Table and the SWMN will publish information about the above projects and their learnings from the Good Food Network on both of their websites and will include articles in the quarterly SWMN newsletter.

Results and Outcomes

1. Regional Steering Committee builds and coalesces food system knowledge and becomes a central resource for food system stakeholders in the region and nationally. Measured by requests for information and/or speaking engagements from RSC members and by self-evaluations.
2. Producers and community groups increase awareness about successful projects and build

- capacity to collaborate and carry out their own successful projects. Measured in conference and training evaluations and number of new collaborations and replication of model projects.
3. New producers, community groups and government entities enter into the community of practice nurtured by the SWMN. Measured by participation at SW Good Food Planning meeting and increased numbers at the Conference, regional trainings and on the mailing list.

Plan for the Regional Steering Committee (RSC)

We will invite the following regional food system stakeholders and experts to serve either on the RSC or on an advisory council to the RSC:

James Ranch (ranchers, CO); Gene Lopez, NM Apple Council. Steve Warshawer, La Montanita Food Cooperative (distributor/retailer, NM); Paul New (farmer, CO); Varga Garland, Tucson Community Food Security Center (AZ); Jerry Sandoval, NA Liaison NM Economic Development Department; Richard Sparks, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food; Cindy Gentry, Community Food Connections (AZ); Rainbow Natural Foods (distributor, CO); Sally Haines, CO Farmers' Market Association; Jim Dyer, SWMN; Pam Roy/Le Adams, Farm to Table; Jim Goodwin, Western Rural Development Center (UT); Monte Skarsgard, Los Poblanos Organics (farmer, NM); Representative Brian Moore (retailer, NM); Patti Martinson, Taos County Economic Development Center (meat processor, NM); Latha Yatabe (nutritionist, Navajo Nation), Dawn Thilmany, CO State University. Craig Mapel, NM Department of Agriculture.

Once the RSC is established, meetings will be initiated by conference call due to the size of the four-state region. Members will be asked to share their experience and vision for the region and engage in some strategic planning for how the body can be most useful, including mechanisms for publicizing that the RSC is available for presentations and consulting. We will subsequently have monthly conference calls to follow up on agreed upon strategies. The RSC will plan and lead the SW Good Food Planning Meeting and will present at the SWMN Conference.

List of Collaborators: *see attached letters of support for names and contact for many of our collaborators, additional collaborators include:*

Western Rural Development Center, Jim Goodwin, jim.goodwin@usu.edu
NMSU Cooperative Extension, Gerald Chacon, gchacon@nmsu.edu
Traditional Native American Farmers Association, Clayton Brascoupe, cbrascoupe@yahoo.com
The Colorado Food and Agriculture Policy Council, Adrian Card, acard@bouldercounty.org
Navajo Department of Agriculture, John Blueyes, john_b_87421@yahoo.com
DINE, Inc., Kyril Casoyas, 928-714-9422
Hopi Foundation/Natwani Coalition, Andrew Lewis, natwani@hotmail.com
AZ Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, Russ Tronstad, (520) 621-2425
Colorado Organic Producers Association, Jim Dyer
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Suzanne Mikkelson, 303-752-5800
And many other farmers, agencies and community groups in the region.

Organizational Capacity and Sustainability

Farm to Table and the SWMN are uniquely qualified to serve as a Regional Lead Team due to the breadth and depth of their relationships with organizations and individuals in all parts of the food system and across the region and due to ongoing efforts to build the regional food system. Since its inception, Farm to Table has focused on maximizing its efforts through the creation of

partnerships and has gradually built a reputation as a major networking resource in New Mexico and throughout the Southwest. Our work as a Regional Lead for the National Farm to School Network indicates our ability to act as bridge between producers and buyers and we have demonstrated success in bringing together diverse groups through its creation of the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council which is comprised of individual farmers, producer groups, service providers, educators, agency representatives and others.

The SWMN is the most comprehensive food system organization in the region, providing training, technical assistance and networking opportunities to more than 3,700 recipients on issues of priority in the region, including on-the-ground community model projects such as the development of Native American Farmers' Markets, the Southern Colorado local food system project and the inception of food policy councils in each state. Each year we host the annual Southwest Marketing Network Conference which provides an opportunity for a growing number of participants (over 250 this year) to gain and share knowledge and skills and develop relationships with other participants. The diverse group of participants includes people from the Four Corners states (and beyond) of many backgrounds who work in every aspect of the food system. Attendees consistently indicate in conference evaluations that the event invigorates their excitement about their work and creates a sense of community. The SWMN has been a recipient of a USDA Community Food Projects Training and Technical Assistance grant, through which we have helped prospective applicants plan projects and write grants and existing applicants to increase the efficacy of their projects through collaboration with other regional groups.

Farm to Table is led by Pamela Roy and Le Adams. Le over 20 many years of experience in small-scale farming, farmers' market sales and management, agricultural education, and community and conference organizing. Le coordinates the Farm to School program in New Mexico. Pam has close to 20 years of experience in food access and assessment, organizational development, conference planning and farmers' markets and has worked internationally in lesser-developed countries. She currently coordinates the NMFAPC and has served as a Board member and officer of the national Community Food Security Coalition for the past six years. Prior to that she served as president of the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association.

Tawnya Laveta and Ilana Blankman provide program support for the organization. Tawnya has been working on the food system for over six years, including work on an educational farm in Colorado, serving on the board of the Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute and as director for the SW Grassfed Livestock Association. She is now an organizer with the NM Tribal Extension Task Force, and works on tribal farmers' market development, policy issues and outreach to farmers and community organizations. With a background in community and regional planning, Ilana has been working on local food issues and community economic development for three years. She provides support to Farm to Table's projects with a focus on outreach, research and policy.

Jim Dyer serves as Director of the SW Marketing Network and is responsible for coordinating and carrying out many of the marketing trainings and for coordinating the network's work with on-the-ground projects. Jim received USDA support from 1998-2001 for technical assistance in the Four Corners area and is part of the Colorado Organic Producers Association, helping to bring its diverse members into the network. He is the lead person for Colorado's food and agriculture policy council initiatives and works on the Farm to Cafeteria program.

Farm to Table and the Southwest Marketing Network receive funding from a number of sources including the USDA, the NM Department of Agriculture, the Kellogg Foundation, the McCune Charitable Foundation, Winrock International, the Lumpkin Family Foundation, and others. Developing a community of practice is an integral part of Farm to Table and SWMN's work and after the grant period ends, we will continue to include RLT activities in our work.

Budget (please see attached excel file)