



Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP): East Central Region

Cultivating Direct and Wholesale Market Outlets By Miranda Duschack and Katie Nixon, Small Farm Specialists

Down to Earth: Reports from the field

Smart business is all about diversification. As the demand for local food grows, small farmers need to consider all the available marketing options for selling farm products. Many small farmers use direct marketing as their only selling strategy, however this can be limiting. For example, the number of farmers' market visitors can fluctuate during periods of inclement weather often leaving you with excess perishable produce. It makes smart business sense to cultivate other avenues of marketing. Why not consider wholesaling? Wholesaling can save you time and generate profit. The following tips will help you consider the various options available.

Restaurants: This may be a good market to start with to get your feet wet. Restaurants don't typically buy the large quantities that other wholesalers need. You can generally fetch a price closer to retail from the restaurants, so price-wise it might not be as much of a shock.

- Never approach a chef during the busy hours, like just before or during breakfast, lunch and dinner time. Instead, go in the restaurant during 'off hours.' It is generally a good idea to take samples of your products with you to give to the chef as a gesture of good will so he or she can see the quality of your product.
- Some chefs like to see a list of produce you can offer them throughout the entire growing season. Before going to the restaurant, type up a list of your produce and when it will be ready for harvest. Leave this with the chef and make sure your contact information is included along with a brief description of your farm. Get them invested in your story.
- Chefs like interesting foods, but they also need the staples like tomatoes and lettuce greens. Ask them if there is something you can grow for them, but don't make promises you may not be able to keep. (*cont. p.3. . .*)

In The Spotlight: Kim Carr

By Janet Hurst

When Kim Carr is asked about her occupation, she hesitates just a moment. Like many country women she wears several hats including: Farmer, Farmers' Market Master and Photographer. Kim states, "All my interests are intertwined and one cannot be separated from another."

Kim was first called to the country life after growing up in the City. "In the middle of St. Louis, I had hamsters and mice, anything living that I could smuggle past my mom. Kim's love of animals led her to seek a degree in Animal Science. Even while away at school she once reportedly spent her rent money on a calf! "I raised that calf from a bottle and it followed me all over campus. What could I do when the time came for the auction? I had to call my mother and tried to explain that one!"

After college, Kim purchased a small farm in Missouri and worked in various occupations. An opportunity came to her and she began working for a large agri business company. "It was the first time I had a job that allowed me to do what I was trained to do. I had a salary, insurance, vacation days, the whole package." However, Kim longed for the days when she could farm her own ground and migrate from the corporate environment. When she was downsized two years ago, she saw that as an opportunity to reinvent herself. Kim states, "Of course, security went out the window! But I began to ask myself what I could do from my farm. How could I make a living doing what I know and love?" The answer came looking out the window and through the shutter of her camera: from the land and the animals. Inspired by her grandparents, Kim knew that farming was in her blood and she followed (*cont. p.2*)

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Kim Carr

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their example; a bit of this, a little of that and a whole lotta' work! Kim states, "It was shades of Ma and Pa Kettle! At my place sometimes you have to step over a goat before you can walk out the door. The sheep all run out to see if there is something to eat involved. I suppose my end goal was to recreate the fond memories of my childhood." Kim's grandmother and her mother are an integral part of the farm, giving advice from time to time. Kim states, "I think of myself as a farmer, but my Grandma says I still have ways to go! She is 97 now and still takes an active role in the farm."

Over the course of the past two years, Kim began to see herself as an artist/farmer. Her award winning photos capture the heart of the animal, the breath of rural life and evoke fond memories of quiet country days. "To me everything is a picture. I see certain things and literally frame them in my mind. I know immediately when I take a photo if it is going to be good or not. I don't have any formal training. Taking pictures seems simply to be a real part of who I am."

In addition to maintaining an active working farm, Kim has stepped into the arena of the art world over the course of the past two years. "I have done some exhibits and shows at several

galleries. It is still hard for me to call myself an artist." However, artist she is, with 12 collections including farm animals, dogs, cats, barns, holiday scenes and more. Her work is offered as prints or other formats such as note cards and she displays her work throughout Missouri.

"I'm still building my business and one day I hope to say it provides for all my needs. For now, it makes me happy. I like getting up every day and every time I go outside, my camera is in my pocket ready to greet the day."



Janet Hurst

Meet ISFOP Staff member: Janet Hurst

Janet Hurst, an author and a certified cheesemaker from New Haven, Missouri, joined the ISFOP team in July of 2009. She was born and raised in Hannibal, Missouri; which was the hometown of another famous Missouri author, Mark Twain. Janet graduated from Hannibal Sr. High School and later studied at the Vermont Institute of Artisan Cheese, the University of Guelph, and on small farms in Israel.

Janet's writings have been featured in several national publications; which include The Dairy Goat Journal, Sauce, Mary Jane's Farm, Small Farm Today, and The Mother Earth News. Her first book, *Homemade Cheese*, was published in March, 2011 by Voyageur Press. When Janet is not writing or serving her small farm clients, she offers cheese making classes throughout the state of Missouri. Beyond her professional life, however, her first priority remains being committed to her husband, Charlie, and son, James.

Prior to joining ISFOP, Janet worked as a herdmaster and head cheese maker at Heartland Dairy in northeast Missouri. Janet has a passion for all things dairy and joined ISFOP to share this enthusiasm with small farmers in east central Missouri.



THE IPM CORNER: Using Trap Crops to Minimize Damage to Vegetables by Insect Pests

By Dr. Jaime Piñero:
LUCE Integrated Pest Management State Specialist

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program at Lincoln University Cooperative Extension in Jefferson City, Missouri is seeking out affordable alternative insect pest management strategies to combat the growing threats to the smallholder's livelihoods in Missouri. One such method is called **trap cropping**.

What are trap crops? Trap crops are plants that are planted next to a higher value crop so as to attract pests as either a food source or oviposition site (where they lay eggs), thus preventing or making less likely the arrival of the pest to the main crop, the cash crop. Insects congregated in trap crops can be more easily attacked by natural enemies and/or killed by insecticides or by other physical means. In other words, trap cropping func-

tions by concentrating and/or killing the pest in the border area, while reducing pest numbers on the unsprayed cash crop. **Plant species or cultivar used needs to be more attractive to pest than crop.**

Advantages: By using trap crops, farmers can: (1) lessen pesticide use and decrease costs, (2) preserve indigenous natural enemies, (3) improve crop quality, and (4) help conserve the soil and environment.

Tips for successful trap cropping: (1) learn to know and identify the pests and their natural enemies, (2) make a farm plan to guide you on where and when the trap crops will be planted, (3) monitor your plants regularly, (4) immediately control the

pests that are found in your trap crop, otherwise they will serve as a breeding ground, (5) if needed, be ready to sacrifice your trap crop as an early crop and destroy them as soon as the pest infestation gets too high, and (6) always keep farm records. What trap crops worked best and against which insect pests?

Examples: In Massachusetts, six butternut growers planted a Blue Hubbard border around butternut squash fields that ranged in size from 2-6 acres. These six fields were compared to conventional butternut fields where beetles were controlled with full-field insecticide sprays. Fields were scouted twice weekly until first leaves, then weekly until flowering. Borders were sprayed at the first arrival of the beetles. Cucumber beetles were only found in the trap crop and insecticides were applied only to the perimeter trap crop. As a result, 85 percent less insecticide was applied.

In Missouri, a farmer in St. Peters was able to prevent cucumber beetles (*cont. p.3. . .*)

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from eating his indoor cucumber transplants by using Blue Hubbard planted in pots and placing these outside of his high tunnel. Four potted plants congregated hundreds of beetles while none was found inside the high tunnel. Research led by Dr. Piñero is being conducted in this area for the benefit of Missouri vegetable farmers. Other examples of specific trap crops are presented in the table below:

To control	Use this Trap Crop	Observations
Cucumber beetles	Blue Hubbard squash	Plant Blue Hubbard two weeks before main cucurbit crop, can apply systemic insecticide to kill arriving beetles
Colorado potato beetle	Potato variety Superior (grows well in cool weather)	Plant the trap crop between last year's and this year's fields (near overwintering sites)
Squash bugs	Squash	Main crops: zucchini, watermelon. Can treat the trap crop with an insecticide to control an infestation
Flea beetles	Chinese Southern Giant Mustard (<i>Brassica juncea</i> var. <i>crispifolia</i>)	Main crops: cabbage, broccoli, or cauliflower. Reseeding of the trap crop may be necessary
Diamondback moth	Yellow rocket	Attracts moths, inhibits larval development. Main crops: cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower. Insecticides may not be needed as natural enemies may control the pest population
European corn borer and fruitworm	Corn (sweet or field)	Main crop: pepper (for European corn borer) and tomato (for fruitworm)

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Grocery stores: This is a market that will demand a lot of product. Before approaching a grocery store it is important to know the structure of the business. Is the store able to make independent buying decisions or are they tied to a regional office and therefore bound to one distributor? Once you find that the grocery store is willing to buy from local growers you can approach either the store manager or the produce manager.

- Know what the wholesale produce price is when you go in. Know what you want to get for your produce and be flexible during negotiations.
- Find out how the grocery store wants you to package your product. Do they want greens individually bunched? How many pounds would they like their tomato cases to be?
- Be consistent with communication and your product delivery, quality and packaging.

Schools: School districts across the state of Missouri are exploring ways to increase student consumption of produce while also supporting their local economies.

- Telephone the school district food service director to gauge interest and request a face-to-face meeting. Have a complete product and price list that includes estimated quantities and dates of availability.

- Children are generally more susceptible to foodborne illnesses so pay extra attention to food safety practices such as product cleanliness, appropriate packaging and chilled transportation.
- Supplying the school salad bar is a good way to get started because it requires smaller volumes of product.

On-line buying clubs: More and more of these groups are popping up in the United States. Some of them are home delivery services and others distribute at an aggregation point. No matter where they distribute, they are all looking for good quality, locally grown produce.

- Clean, consistent packaging is key. Build the cost of packaging into your pricing. If you are certified organic, you need to make sure your packaging fits the protocol.
- These groups are typically more flexible with the timing of delivery and how the produce makes it to their commissary or distribution point. Sometimes they may even pick it up.
- You, as a grower, need to have at least a week's worth of storage on your farm and need to follow the proper post-harvest handling guidelines.

Aggregators: Produce brokers, or aggregators, purchase local product and distribute it to other venues. They sell to a variety of

markets including restaurants, produce stands, hospitals, nursing homes and schools.

- Aggregators buy from both farmers who have excess product after their direct market sales, and farmers who have agreed in advance to grow directly for the aggregator. The causal seller needs only to call the aggregator when excess product is ready to move.
- Time your communication with the aggregator appropriately so that your product makes the supply list that goes out to their buyers.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) terminal prices are used as guidelines for pricing, which is often tiered based on volume (*cont. p.4. . .*)

Resources:

Post harvest handling decision tool:
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/valueaddedag/info/postharvesthandlingdecisiontool.htm>

Containers and Packaging Fruits and Vegetables:
http://www.agmrc.org/media/cms/CD1_C07C95889B783.pdf

USDA quality standards for wholesaling:
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/standards>

Farm to School: *Local Food Connections: From Farms to Schools* Iowa State University Extension PM 1853a June 2000.

ISFOP

If you are a small farmer and need information, please contact an ISFOP Farm Outreach Worker (FOW). FOWs live and work in your community. They can provide information on ways to better manage your resources, reduce expense and increase income. They can also provide information on other programs and resources that may increase your income and the overall quality of life for your family.

You are eligible to participate if:

- Your family lives on a farm, rural or urban.
- Farm products or income from the farm are necessary for you to live where you do.
- Your family provides the management and most of the labor for your farm.
- Your total annual family income is less than \$50,000.

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and cost of transportation.

Some general tips:

- Approach these wholesale markets in the winter when you are planning your crop calendar, ask them what they want, and plan to plant twice the quantity they are asking for.
- Be consistent with product and communication.
- Remember that most wholesalers are not cash on trade. You may have to wait for about two weeks before receiving payment.

Working with wholesalers takes a different kind of planning and preparation than direct marketing. However, these two markets have one thing in common; you need to cater to the customer. Approach these markets in person rather than on the phone. Just like direct marketing you need to build a personal relationship with your wholesale customer. They want to sell your story along with your produce. Combining wholesaling and retailing can provide you with a more reliable and steady income.

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Lincoln University of Missouri, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. Dr. Steven Meredith, Dean, College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences. Distributed in furtherance of the Food and Agricultural Act, 1977 PL 95-98. Dec. 22, 1981.

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St Louis' North City Farmers' Market

By Miranda Duschack

It's a picture perfect Saturday morning in St Louis—blue sky, sunny and warm—an ideal day to explore the North City Farmers' Market located just one mile from downtown in the Old North St Louis neighborhood. Every Saturday from early June to mid-October the refurbished Crown Plaza at 14th Street and St. Louis Avenue (across from the famous Crown Candy Kitchen) is transformed. Children chatter while strolling adults shop the vendor's stalls. A small crowd gathers to watch Chef Ivy lead a cooking demonstration with local eggs and fresh herbs. Neighbors greet each other. The market hours are from 9 am until noon on Saturdays. "We work hard to create a positive community space," said North City Farmers' Market Master Cassandra Howard. She is optimistic about the market's fifth season. "This is still a small market, but it is growing. This year we have 14 vendors, up from 10 in 2010. Most of our vendors, such as the 13th Street Community Garden, New Roots Urban Farm and W.M. Farm sell produce but we also have two meat vendors (Whetstone Farms and Villarreal Family Farm) and two bakeries, Black Bear and Angel Baked Cookies. And also this year we have brewed coffee for sale at La Mancha Café."

This market provides a good venue for backyard and community gardeners to sell their produce. The average weekly attendance of 150 people wouldn't support many full-time farmers, but to attract them the market has devised a clever system. Shelley Meyer of Whetstone Farm delivers her frozen meat to the Old North Grocery Cooperative earlier in the week. Community volunteers staff her Saturday market booth. Meyer then returns to collect the unsold product and money. This is a creative solution for a smaller market to provide the variety of products the customers want.

This farmers' market is a sign of renewal for Old North St. Louis. Like many urban areas, Old North experienced significant depopulation throughout the latter half of the 20th century. Business and grocery stores closed making healthy, affordable food difficult to find. The entire neighborhood suffered. But Old North St. Louis is on the upswing. In recent years, residents have joined forces with the Old North Restoration Group, a non-profit organization, to improve the situation. The results are dramatic. During the past five years they have established a farmers' market, a food cooperative and a community garden. All three work in unison to provide fresh, healthy food to the neighborhood residents. The market provides a limited number of free 'vouchers-as-cash' to the clients of a local food pantry. In addition, Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), debit cards and cash are all accepted. For more information about the market and special event *Vegetapalooza* on Saturday, August 6, 2011, visit their web site at <http://northcityfarmersmarket.blogspot.com/>.

