NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Connecting the Public with Farmers

Dyvon Havens
WSU Provost Tour 2002
Challenges

• Loss of processors
• Regulations
• Commodity price
• Conversion of farmland
• Loss of pest management tools
• Loss of connection with the public
Solutions

- Form alliances
- First find out what consumer wants
- Diversify
- Add value
- Differentiate product
- Bolster marketing skills
- Educate the public
1996 Survey

- 70% - quality of life very important
- 66% - very important to protect open space
- 57% - very important to protect wildlife habitat
- 36% - agriculture is very important
“The farmers’ best ally is an informed public!”
Consumers Want

- High quality
- Fresh
- Nutritious
- Safe for kids
- Farms good stewards
- Cost? Not!
Western Washington
HARVEST CELEBRATIONS

Skagit  Pierce

Clallam  Clark

King  Snohomish

Thurston  Kitsap

Whatcom  Mason
Promoting sustainable community-based food and farm systems.

Cascade Harvest Coalition

Building healthy food and farm systems by cultivating common ground among farming and non-farming communities.
Western Washington Summary 2001

- 17,000 visitors
- 90 farms
- $85,000 leveraged
Skagit: Festival of Family Farms

Attendance

Year 2002: 5,000 people
Year 2001: 4,000 people
Year 2000: 3,740 people
Year 1999: 2,500 people
• Your Extension Faculty at work!
Promoting and educating about good nutrition
Farmer to Consumer education
• Farm retail sales
“I’m not one of the host farms, but my farm sales triple during the weekend of the Festival of Family Farms. It brings people out to the farms, and I benefit from that.”
• Kids learning to be entrepreneurs
• **Kids learning about the source of their food**
Collaborating with agencies, organizations & private business
• VOLUNTEERS: Teaching a sense of leadership & responsibility.
• *Kids learning to be entrepreneurs*
Building capacity in 4-H
• **Strengthening families**
• Friendly people and farmers
• Educational, informative
• Food
• Oriented toward kids & families
• Farmers took time out to talk to them
• Surveys tell us we’re making a difference!
42% Attitude Change

- Impressed with complexity and amount of knowledge required.
- Increased understanding of farming.
- Increased respect and appreciation for farmers and farming.
Farmland preservation support

Thirty-nine people indicated they would like to receive information about how to preserve farming and farmland.
Of those who attended *Festival of Family Farms* in previous years, 36% changed their food buying habits as a result of attending the *Festival*. Most buy more locally, and some buy more organic.
“Thank You!”

- “Really makes us feel more involved in the farming community, more committed and invested.”

- “Great way to educate the public, especially the children.”
“Thank You! Thank You!”

- “Now have a much better understanding of how competition from foreign countries can drive some of our farmers out of business. Will support our farmers markets in my area.”
“Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!”

- Many of us live here and never get to see the farming community. Thanks!”

- We are all too fortunate to have all this bounty around us and the people connected with it.”
Touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, seeing.

Making the CONNECTION is what it’s all about.