Agricultural Marketing in the U.S. Southwest

Information and Training Needs of Small-Scale Producers and Service Organizations

Lydia Oberholtzer, Holly Born, and Jim Dyer

Results of a Survey by the Southwest Marketing Network

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June 2004

Project and Contact Information

The Southwest Marketing Network is a collaborative project with steering committee members from nine organizations: Colorado State University, Farm Connection, Farm to Table, Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy at Winrock International, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture, Traditional Native American Farmers Association, University of Arizona, and Western Rural Development Center. Project background, contact information, and details of the Network's current activities are available online at http://www.swmarketing.ncat.org, or by contacting the authors of this report.

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CHAPTER ONE

Project Context

Small-scale farmers and ranchers in the southwestern United States are part of a diverse and productive agricultural system, yet are often disadvantaged by size, geography, and cultural factors. The Southwest Marketing Network, a collaboration among non-profit, Extension, and Native-American groups, was established to build on the many strengths of the area's agriculture and to increase regional marketing expertise and opportunities. This report, a joint effort by staff of the Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy, the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), and the Southwest Marketing Network, describes the results of a survey of service providers in the Four Corners states. The survey was undertaken to gain a better understanding of the capacity of service organizations to provide assistance in agricultural marketing to small-scale farmers and ranchers, and of the information and training needs of organizations and the small-scale producers they serve.

Agriculture in the Four Corners States

Farms and ranches in the Four Corners states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah make an important contribution to rural communities and the larger economy of the region. They produce a diverse array of meat and dairy products, small grains, vegetables, and fruits, as well as herbs, flowers, cotton, wool products, and livestock feeds. Very small-scale production is common in many parts of the region. At the national level, approximately 90 percent of all farms and ranches are 'small farms' with annual sales under $250,000, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Commission on Small Farms. In the Four Corners states, approximately 93 percent of farms and ranches are 'small farms,' using USDA's definition, and 85 percent have annual sales under $100,000[1].

Small-scale farms and ranches in the region, like many across the nation, are struggling financially and searching for ways to increase their productivity and profitability. The challenges for agricultural producers start with the region's contrasting geography and climate extremes, including deserts and mountains, physical landscapes that vary over short distances, high altitudes, and low rainfall. Many small-scale operations are extremely remote or scattered in isolated areas of favorable climate and elevation. In addition, many are far from the economic, political, educational, and institutional centers of the region. Cultural and language differences compound this isolation and result in underserved populations. As well as being disadvantaged in conventional marketing systems by the small size of their operations, many of the region's farmers and ranchers produce alternative or unconventional food, feed, or fiber products, and a large portion consists of traditionally under-served minorities, especially Hispanic and American Indian.

While entrepreneurial spirit is prevalent among agricultural producers in the region, as evidenced by numerous roadside stands, market vendors, and other informal marketing venues, they often lack the assistance needed to make them as successful as they could be. Conventional types of marketing assistance, training, and outreach are often less accessible to producers because communities are separated by large distances; language and cultural differences impede communication; and agricultural

[1] USDA NASS. 1999. 1997 Census of Agriculture Highlights. Washington, DC: US Dept. of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. Website: http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census97/highlights/ag-state.htm (viewed October 8, 2003).

Extension agents are often responsible for vast territories that may lack telephone service and Internet connections. Excellent marketing programs exist in certain locales, yet their successes are little known outside the local community.

Southwest Marketing Network Formed

The founding of the Southwest Marketing Network has its roots in a November 1999 meeting convened by the Agriculture Policy Project[2] of the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture (the forerunner of the Wallace Center). At this gathering, 21 key people involved in food and agriculture in the Four Corners states met to discuss critical agricultural issues in the region. Attendees included farmers, ranchers, and representatives from agricultural organizations, governmental groups, American Indian tribes, and universities. Two issues of concern were the long distances to markets for small-scale producers and the difficulties in serving producers in isolated areas. During the two-day meeting, participants identified specific changes needed to improve the situation. One of their recommendations was to create a regional marketing network to enhance existing marketing alliances and efforts in the area. The network would seek to increase cooperation among food system producers and marketers, and to improve the incomes and sustainability of small farm and ranch operations.

In February 2002, NCAT, the Wallace Center, Farm to Table, the Western Rural Development Center, and several key partners in the region initiated the Southwest Marketing Network. Primary funding for the 3-year project (2002–2005) was provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, with additional funding from USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA), USDA-CSREES Community Food Projects Program, and NCAT. The purpose of the Network is to ensure that new, existing, and prospective Southwest producers—especially small-scale, alternative, and minority farmers and ranchers—have the necessary connections, technical and financial assistance, marketing information, business and marketing skills, and peer examples to improve their marketing success and overall viability.

The Southwest Marketing Network has five primary activities:

1) Developing the marketing network as an institution and procuring participation by farmers and ranchers and service providers in the Four Corners states;
2) Providing technical assistance and training in business topics and alternative marketing;
3) Facilitating on-the-ground marketing projects;
4) Convening an annual conference on agricultural marketing in the region; and
5) Researching marketing issues of importance to small farm and ranch operations in the region.

One of the Network's first efforts was to develop and implement a survey of the organizations that provide information and training on agricultural marketing topics to small-scale producers in the Four Corners states. The survey focused on the service providers' subject expertise and capacity to deliver information and training on these subjects, as well as the information and training needs of their own organization and its small-scale producer clientele. Insights gained from the survey will help the Network to direct regional resources to those with the greatest need for assistance, and to develop and target its own training programs more effectively. We hope this report will assist other service organizations in the region with their planning and training efforts as well.

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[2] A final report from the project is available at http://www.winrock.org/wallacecenter/makingchanges.pdf, or from the Wallace Center. Reference: *Making Changes: Turning Local Visions into National Solutions: Agriculture and Rural Development Policy Recommendations from the Agriculture Policy Project* by K. Clancy, E. Higgins, and L. Oberholtzer. 2001. Arlington, VA: Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy at Winrock International.

CHAPTER TWO

Survey Methodology

The objectives of the survey were to: (1) assess the capacity of service organizations in the Four Corners states to provide information and training in agricultural marketing to small-scale farmers and ranchers, and (2) assess the information and training needs of service organizations and their small-scale producer clients in regard to agricultural marketing. Agricultural service providers likely to deliver information or training in agricultural marketing in the region were the target respondents. These included USDA Cooperative Extension agents, personnel from State departments of agriculture, and staff of non-profit organizations and businesses. By focusing on service providers, we were able to assess the capacity and perceived needs of their organizations, as well as the perceived needs of their clientele.

The survey (see Appendix A for the survey questionnaire) was designed to:

1) Collect demographic information on the service provider's clients, such as target audiences, geographic scope, and farm size and income;
2) Assess the levels of information and training on agricultural marketing topics offered by service organizations to their small-scale producer clients;
3) Examine the information and training needs of service organizations and their small-scale producer clients;
4) Explore the barriers to access of information and training faced by small-scale producers, and identify the types of resources used most often to access information and training; and
5) Identify key agricultural marketing issues for small-scale producers in the Four Corners states.

Most of the survey, excluding Section I (which emphasized demographics), focused specifically on the service provider's clientele of small-scale farmers and ranchers.

The survey recipient list was selected primarily from the Southwest Marketing Network's mailing list of over 3,000 contacts in the Four Corners states. From this list, a subset of contacts judged likely to offer assistance in agricultural marketing in the region was selected to receive the survey. In addition, a few individuals located outside the region, who offer assistance in the area, were added to the survey mailing list. An initial batch of survey questionnaires was mailed in November 2002, followed by one reminder postcard sent the following month. A second batch of questionnaires was mailed in January 2003 to additional contacts in Arizona and Utah, with a reminder postcard sent a month later. In total, 405 surveys were mailed.

Ninety-four surveys were returned by the respondents, and 87 were valid (with at least 25 percent of the survey completed), yielding an overall response rate of 21 percent (Table 1). Of the 87 valid surveys, 33 were received from service providers in Colorado (38 percent), 30 from New Mexico (34 percent), 14 from Arizona (16 percent), 9 from Utah (10 percent), and 1 from Texas (1 percent). Utah was under-represented in the survey mailing because the Network mailing list, at the time, had comparatively more contacts for service providers in the other three states.

The response rate from Arizona recipients was 11 percent (i.e., 14 were returned from a total of 129 mailed), while the response rates for each of the other Four Corners states ranged from 25 to 27 percent (Table 1). Although we are unable to account for the lower return rate from Arizona, it is possible that the Network's Arizona contacts included fewer service providers involved directly in agricultural marketing, since the Network's larger mailing list was compiled from a variety of sources.

Table 1: Survey Response Rate by State

State	No. mailed	No. returned	Response rate	Percentage (of total) returned
Colorado	121	33	27%	38%
New Mexico	114	30	26%	34%
Arizona	129	14	11%	16%
Utah	36	9	25%	10%
Outside Four Corners states	5	1	20%	1%
Total	405	87	21%	100%

Figure 1: Organizational Affiliations of Respondents

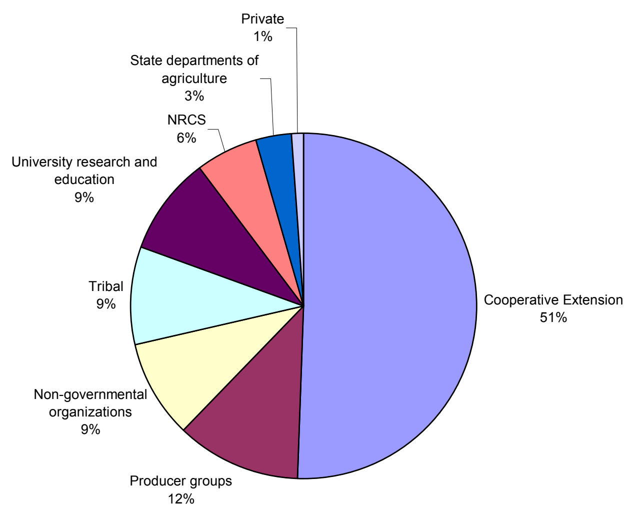


Figure 1 illustrates the organizational affiliations of the survey respondents. Fifty-one percent of the valid surveys were received from Cooperative Extension personnel; 12 percent from producer groups (such as farmers' markets and food cooperatives); 9 percent each from non-governmental organizations, tribal organizations, and university research and education entities (excluding Extension); 6 percent from NRCS personnel; 3 percent from State departments of agriculture personnel; and 1 percent from private entities (e.g., business consultants).

The survey data were entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. Chapter 3 provides primarily descriptive results. We also use the responses to the questions in Section II (on organizational capacity to deliver information and training on individual topics) and Section III (on the importance of information and training on these topics for service organizations and their small-scale producer clients) to examine the relationship between the two variables. The analysis will help the Network to identify where there are gaps between the perceived need for information and training on various topics, and the capacity to deliver these services.

One limitation of the survey is that by asking service providers for their views on the needs of their clients, we have used an indirect measure of the information and training needs of small-scale producers in the Four Corners states. At this time, direct surveying of small-scale farmers and ranchers, to assess their educational needs in agricultural marketing, has not been done by the Southwest Marketing Network, or to our knowledge, by others.

CHAPTER THREE

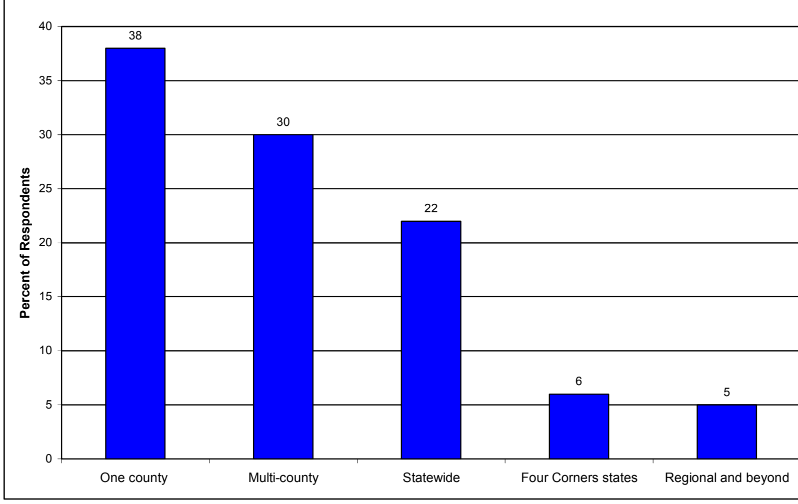
Survey Results

Client Demographics

In Section I of the survey questionnaire, we asked service providers about their clients. Regarding geographic distribution (Question 1), the majority of survey respondents (68 percent) said they serve a local clientele—either a multi-county or one-county area. Twenty-two percent serve a statewide clientele and 5 to 6 percent serve the Four Corners states as a whole, or areas beyond the region (Fig. 2).

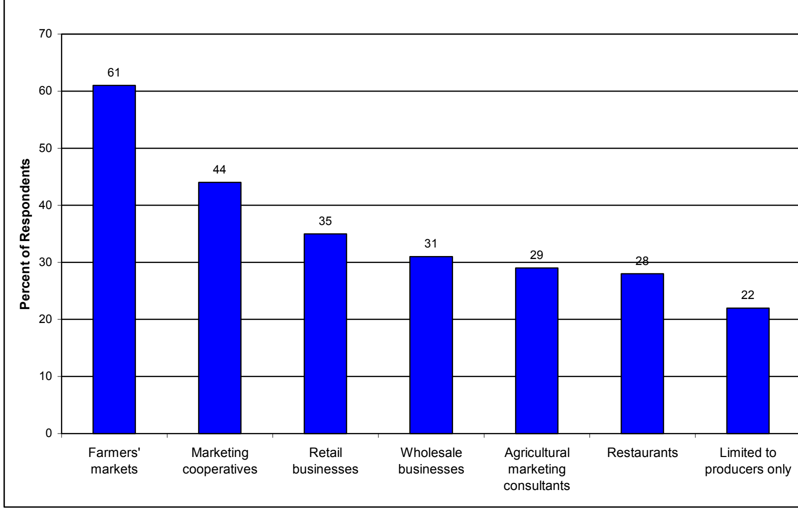
Figure 3 depicts the types of clients (either institutions or individuals) served by the respondents (Q8). More than half (61 percent) serve farmers' markets and 44 percent serve marketing cooperatives. About one-third provide assistance to retailers (35 percent), wholesale businesses (31 percent), agricultural marketing consultants (29 percent), or restaurants (28 percent). About 1 in 5 respondents reported that his/her organization serves only farmers or ranchers.

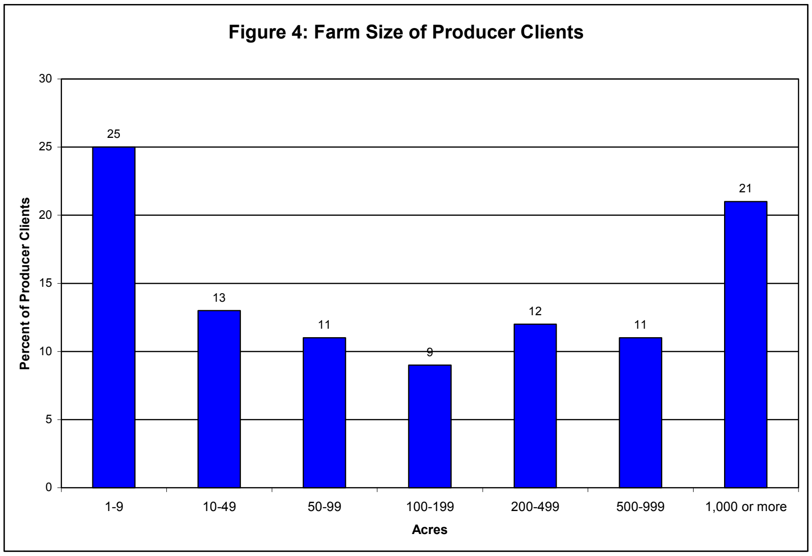
Figure 2: Geographic Area of All Clients



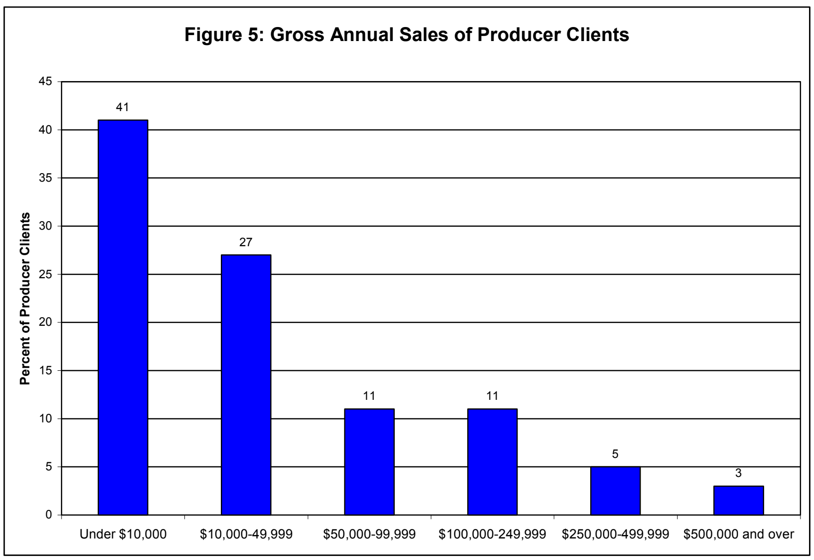
In terms of the total numbers of producer clients served (Q2), the minimum number reported was 6 and the maximum was 30,000. Those reporting higher numbers (i.e., above 15,000) are affiliated with University research and education entities, Extension offices, or State departments of agriculture, which serve producers throughout a given state. The mean reported was almost 2,000, with a median of 265. The sum of all farmers and ranchers served by the respondents is nearly 154,000, although this number does not discern duplicates (i.e., individuals counted by more than one respondent).

Figure 3: Types of Clients Served





Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the respondents' producer clientele by size of operation and gross annual sales (Q3). The farm size results (Fig. 4) show a skew toward either end of the range—small farms under 10 acres make up 25 percent of their producer clients, and those under 100 acres make up almost half. Large farms of 1,000 or more acres make up 21 percent. Producers with farms of 100–999 acres make up only 32 percent of the respondents' clientele base.



With regard to annual sales, Figure 5 indicates a skew towards the lower end of the scale. Ninety percent of the respondents' producer clients are 'small-farm' operators, i.e., those defined by the USDA as having gross annual sales less than $250,000. In addition, 68 percent are operators with gross annual sales under $50,000, and 41 percent with sales under $10,000. Less than 10 percent of the respondents' producer clients are operators with gross annual sales of $250,000 or higher.

Questions 4 through 6 focused on the target audience of the service provider's organization. Almost 40 percent of respondents reported that they serve a specific target audience. Of this group, 20 percent identified their target audience as American Indian farmers, and fewer reported targeting women farmers (5 percent), college students (3 percent), organic farmers (3 percent), or Hispanic farmers (2 percent). Many other target audiences were named once, including sustainable agriculture producer groups, immigrant farmers, and limited-resource farmers. Of the respondents' farmer and rancher clients, on average, 38 percent are minorities and 28 percent produce alternative (non-commodity or unconventional) agricultural goods or use alternative methods, such as organic or pesticide-free production. However, the percentages of minority and alternative clients range widely. Statewide organizations serving large numbers of producers (i.e., above 15,000) have relatively smaller percentages of minority or alternative producers as clients.

Of the respondents' farmer and rancher clients, on average, 38% are minorities and 28% produce alternative (non-commodity or unconventional) agricultural goods or use alternative methods, such as organic or pesticide-free production.

Capacity of Service Organizations to Deliver Information and Training to Small-Scale Producers

In Section II of the survey, we asked service providers about the capacity of their organization to deliver information and training on specific topics to the portion of their clients who are small-scale farmers and ranchers (Q10). 'Information' was defined in the survey as "data presented in some way (e.g., leaflet, handbook, over the telephone) that is provided to your members/clients." 'Training' was defined as "instruction (either in person or by a trainer or through self-training using training modules) to develop proficiency in a topic, in this case an agricultural marketing-related topic."

Question 10 listed 42 specific topics under 5 general headings: marketing options, marketing specific agricultural products, marketing alternatively produced products, market development, and skills-building. For each specific topic, the percentage of respondents offering information and training is shown in Figures 6 through 10. As the figures indicate, for each topic, information is provided at a higher rate than is training, and in most cases, at more than double the rate of training.

Figure 6: Market Options: Information and Training Offered by Service Providers

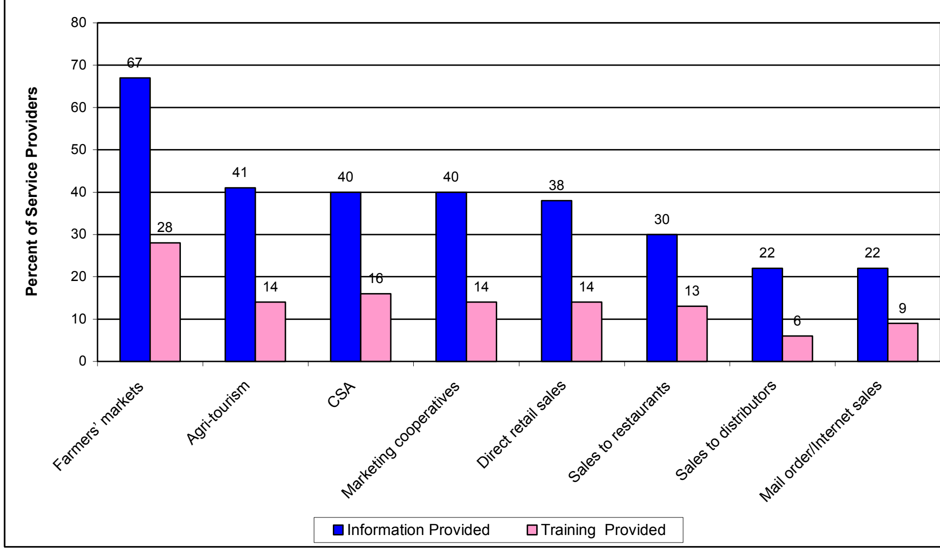


Figure 6 illustrates the proportion of survey respondents who offer assistance to their small-scale producer clients in each of eight marketing options. Two-thirds (67 percent) provide information on farmers' markets. More than one-third deliver information on agri-tourism (41 percent), community supported agriculture (CSA) (40 percent), marketing cooperatives (40 percent), or direct retail sales (38 percent). Thirty percent or fewer provide information on sales to restaurants, sales to distributors, or mail order/Internet sales. With regard to training offered in these 8 marketing channels, 28 percent offer training in farmers' markets, while fewer, ranging from 6 to 16 percent of respondents, offer training in each of the other 7 categories.

Figure 7 depicts the proportion of respondents who provide their small-scale producer clients with marketing-related assistance on specific agricultural goods. About one-half (45 to 52 percent) convey marketing information on vegetables, livestock feed (including hay), meats, or fruits. Approximately one-third (30 to 39 percent) offer information on marketing herbs, food grains and seeds, wool products, or processed foods. Fewer (22 to 24 percent) provide information on marketing flowers, culturally traditional foods, or dairy products. For each of the 11 types of products, training is provided at a comparatively lower level, ranging from 6 to 31 percent. The highest training levels (23 to 31 percent) are offered on marketing livestock feed, vegetables, meats, or fruits, and the lowest levels (6 to 7 percent) for dairy products or flowers.

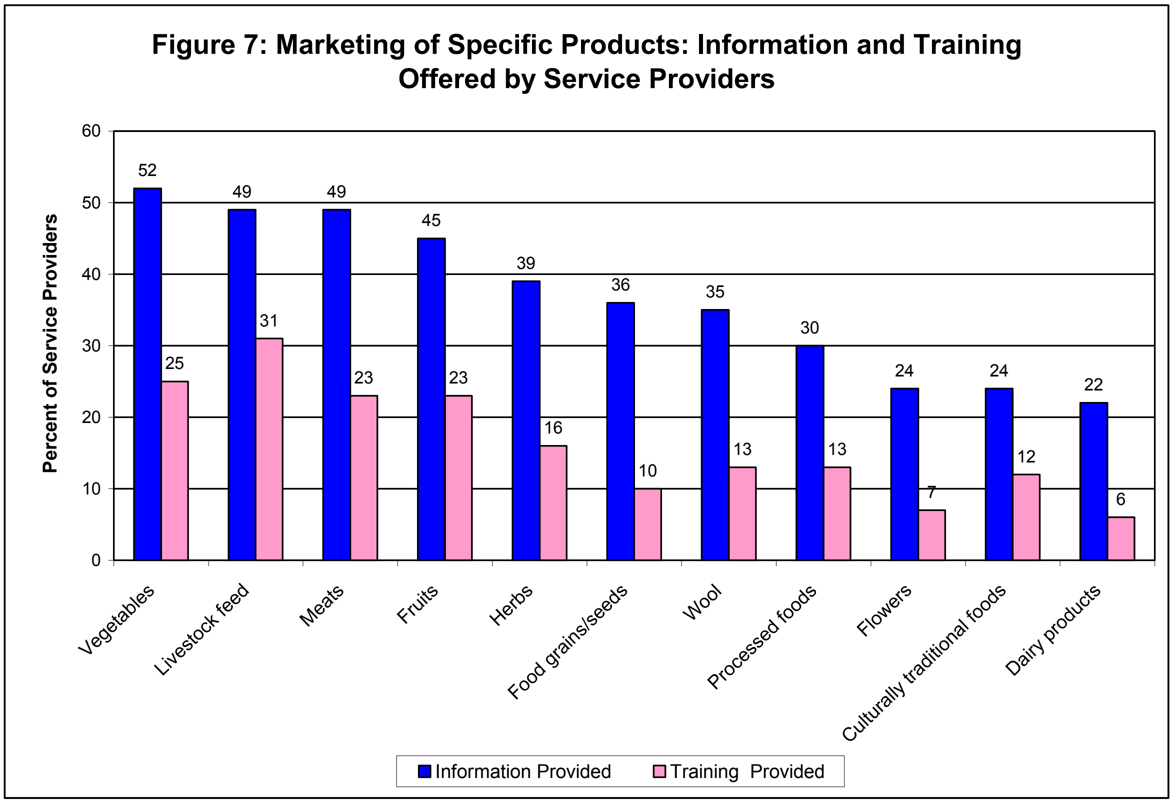


Figure 8 describes information provision with regard to alternatively produced goods (i.e., derived from crops or livestock produced with non-conventional methods). A majority of respondents (60 percent) offer information on marketing organic products, and about half (46 to 55 percent) provide information on marketing free-range/grass-fed/pastured livestock, pesticide/herbicide-free products, or reduced-chemical use products. One-third or fewer deliver information on marketing goods produced with other environmentally friendly or culturally traditional methods. Market-oriented training is provided at a lower level for each of the six topic areas, ranging from 13 percent for culturally traditional production to 25 percent for free range/grass-fed livestock products.

Market development is the focus of Figure 9, and skills-building the focus of Figure 10. For these topic areas, there is less discrepancy between the levels of information, and the levels of training, offered by service providers to their small-scale producer clients. It is possible that market development and skills-building, compared to the other topics examined, lend themselves more easily to a training setting.

For 13 market development topics, nearly one-half of respondents (45 to 48 percent) told us they provide information on farm records/budgeting, small business development, or finding markets (Fig. 9). Fewer, yet more than one-third, provide information on market assessment, food safety, consumer education, or product diversification. More than one-quarter (30 percent) convey information on financing or pricing; while fewer address eco- or other labeling,[3] product development, distribution, or processing. With regard to training in these 13 topics, more than one-quarter of service providers (26 to 37 percent) deliver training in farm records/budgeting, food safety, or consumer education (Fig. 9). Fewer (9 to 24 percent) provide training in each of the other 10 topics. Training in product distribution or eco- and other labeling, the two areas least emphasized, is offered by 10 percent or less.

[3] Eco-labeling (or environmental labeling), as defined by the United Nations, refers to the use of product labels to inform customers that the product is environmentally friendlier relative to other products in the same category.

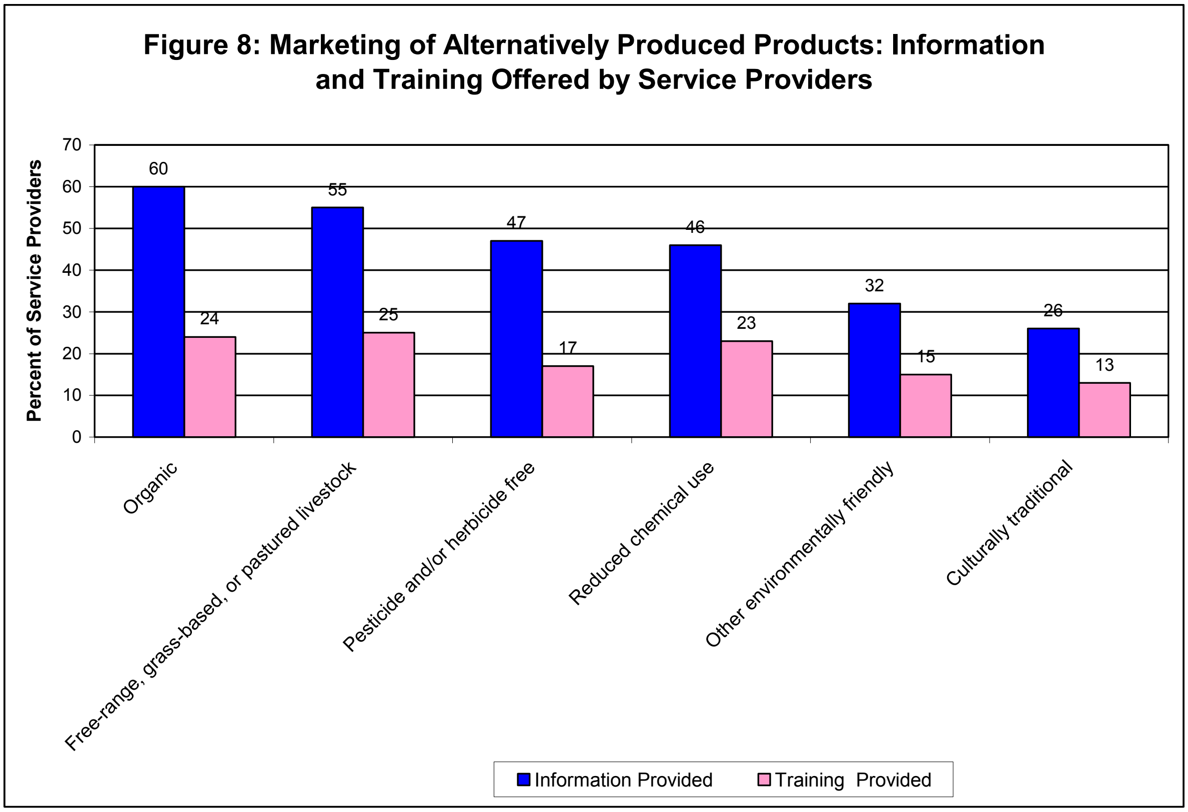


Figure 8: Marketing of Alternatively Produced Products: Information and Training Offered by Service Providers
Percent of Service Providers
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
60
24
55
25
47
17
46
23
32
15
26
13
Organic
Free-range, grass-based, or pastured livestock
Pesticide and/or herbicide free
Reduced chemical use
Other environmentally friendly
Culturally traditional
Information Provided
Training Provided

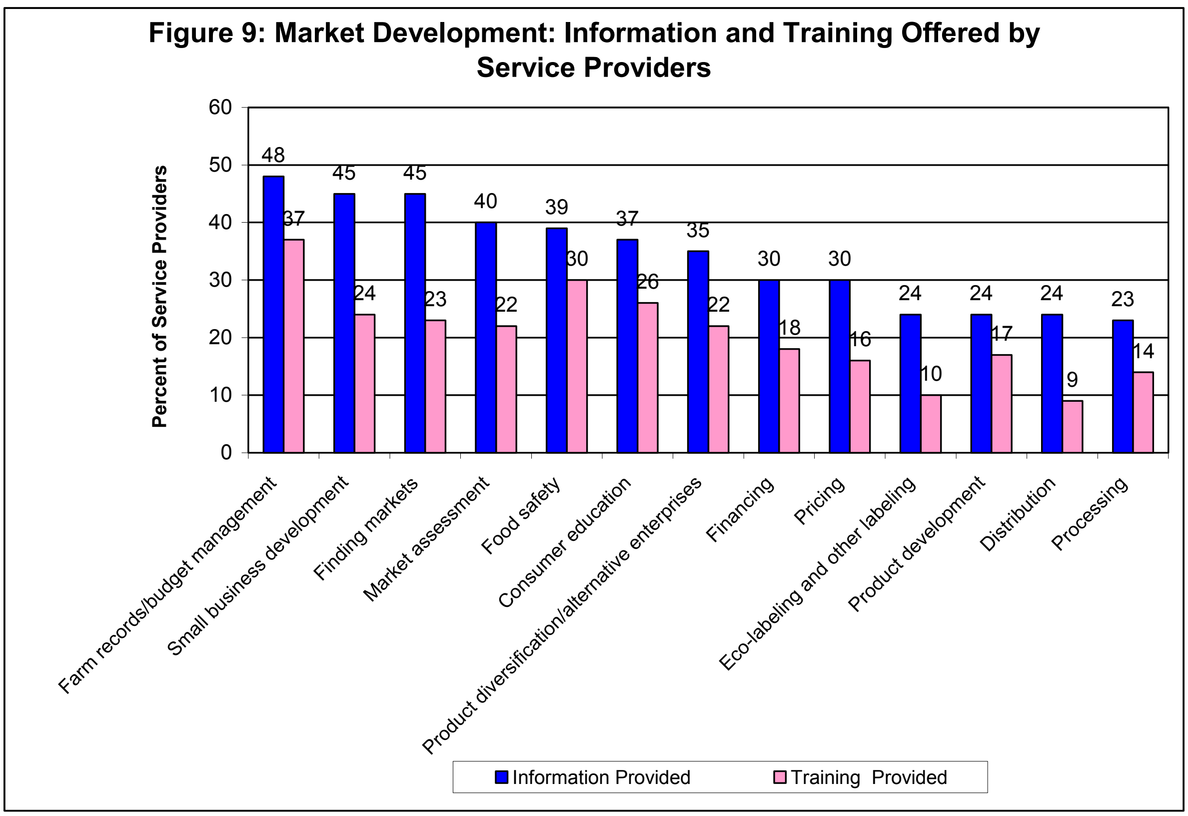
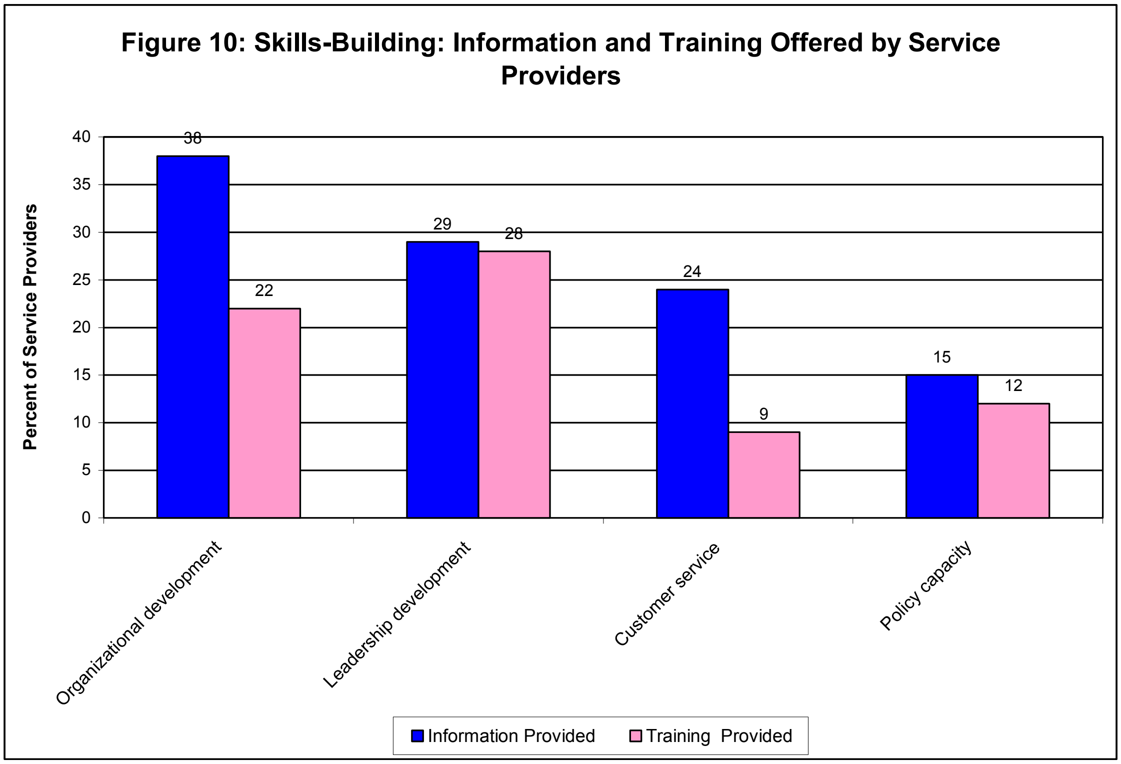


Figure 9: Market Development: Information and Training Offered by Service Providers
Percent of Service Providers
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
48
37
45
24
45
23
40
22
39
30
37
26
35
22
30
18
30
16
24
10
24
17
24
9
23
14
Farm records/budget management
Small business development
Finding markets
Market assessment
Food safety
Consumer education
Product diversification/alternative enterprises
Financing
Pricing
Eco-labeling and other labeling
Product development
Distribution
Processing
Information Provided
Training Provided

With regard to four skills-building topics, 38 percent of survey respondents convey information on organizational development, fewer (24 to 29 percent) address leadership or customer service, and only 15 percent provide information on policy capacity (Fig. 10). In terms of training in these areas, 28 percent focus on leadership development, 22 percent on organizational development, and fewer (9 to 12 percent) address customer service or policy capacity.



The topical areas that receive the least attention, in terms of information delivery by service providers, may signal areas that require additional resources. For the 42 specific topics illustrated in Figures 6 through 10, the following 18 topics (Box 1) are each addressed by less than one-third of respondents:

Box 1: Topics with Least Amount of Information Provided	
<u>Marketing options (Fig. 6)</u> ⇒ Sales to restaurants ⇒ Sales to distributors ⇒ Mail order/Internet sales <u>Marketing specific products (Fig. 7)</u> ⇒ Processed foods ⇒ Flowers ⇒ Culturally traditional foods ⇒ Dairy products <u>Marketing alternative products (Fig. 8)</u> ⇒ Other environmentally friendly products ⇒ Culturally traditional products	<u>Market development (Fig. 9)</u> ⇒ Financing ⇒ Pricing ⇒ Eco-labeling and other labeling ⇒ Product development ⇒ Distribution ⇒ Processing <u>Skills-building (Fig. 10)</u> ⇒ Leadership development ⇒ Customer service ⇒ Policy capacity

Information and Training Needs of Service Organizations and Small-Scale Producer Clients

In Section III of the survey, we asked service providers to prioritize 42 marketing-related topics for (1) their own organization and (2) their small-scale producer clients, with respect to the information and training needs of each (Q11). The survey recipients were asked to rank each topic on a 0 to 3 scale, with 0 conveying a topic of 'no importance' for information and training, and 3 conveying a 'very important' topic. Below, reported by topic area in Tables 2 through 6, are the combined percentages of all survey respondents who ranked a given topic as important, i.e., either as a 2 (important) or 3 (very important).

Appendix B reports the means and standard deviations for the importance rankings discussed below, and indicates the topics for which there are significant differences, at the 0.05 level using paired-sample t-tests, between the rankings for service organizations and their clients. Except for the 10 topics listed in Box 2 (and described in the narrative below), there are no significant differences between the perceived importance for service organizations and their clients. Thus, there is little distinction in the importance rankings for most of the topic areas, in terms of the needs of their own organization and their small-scale producer clients.

Box 2: Topics with Significant Differences in Perceived Needs Between Service Organizations and Clients

- ⇒ Direct retail sales
- ⇒ Sales to distributors
- ⇒ Wool products
- ⇒ Organic products
- ⇒ Finding markets
- ⇒ Financing
- ⇒ Pricing
- ⇒ Organizational development
- ⇒ Leadership development
- ⇒ Policy capacity

Table 2 compiles the importance rankings provided by the respondents in terms of marketing-related assistance for eight marketing options. Approximately half the respondents (47 percent or higher) rated farmers' markets, CSA, marketing cooperatives, agri-tourism, and direct retail sales as important in terms of the information and training needs of their own organization and also its small-scale producer clients, and identified sales to distributors and restaurants as similarly important for their clients. Fewer, yet more than one-third, view assistance in mail order/Internet sales as important for either their own organization or its clients.

More respondents ranked information and training on these eight topics as important for their small-scale producer clients, than for their own organizations. For two of the marketing options, direct retail sales and sales to distributors, there was at least a 13 percent spread between the perceived needs of the service organizations and its clients. For these two topics, there are significant differences in their means at the 0.05 level; thus, the information and training needs are perceived by the respondents as having higher importance for their small-scale producer clients than for their own organization (see Appendix B).

Table 2: Information and Training Needs in Marketing Options

	Percent ranking important/very important		
	For service organizations	**For small-scale producer clients**	**Number of respondents**
Farmers' markets	61	62	79
CSA	55	63	77
Marketing cooperatives	55	60	74
Agri-tourism	49	52	75
Direct retail sales	47	63	78
Sales to restaurants	45	48	75
Sales to distributors	40	53	75
Mail order/Internet sales	37	41	75

Table 3 compiles the importance rankings provided by the survey respondents in terms of marketing-related assistance needed for specific agricultural products. More than half (56 to 69 percent) rated livestock feed, meats, and vegetables as important in terms of the information and training needs of their own organization and its small-scale producer clients. A smaller percentage, yet nearly half, rated fruits, food grains and seeds, herbs, and culturally traditional foods as important, and closer to one-third similarly view processed foods, wool products, dairy products, and flowers as important.

For each of the 11 product categories, the differences between the perceived needs of service organizations and their small-scale producer clients are 7 percent or less, and many have very small differences. Only for wool products is the difference between the means significant at the 0.05 level (see Appendix B). Thus, for marketing these products, the survey respondents perceive higher information and training needs for their clients than for their own organization.

Table 3: Information and Training Needs in Marketing Specific Products

	Percent ranking important/very important		
	For service organizations	**For small-scale producer clients**	**Number of respondents**
Livestock feed, including hay	64	69	75
Meats	63	67	74
Vegetables	58	56	74
Fruits	45	48	72
Food grains and seeds	45	43	72
Herbs	45	43	72
Culturally traditional foods	44	43	71
Processed foods	37	43	71
Wool products	34	41	73
Dairy products	33	35	72
Flowers	31	30	70

Table 4 depicts the importance rankings, as rated by survey respondents, for marketing alternatively produced agricultural goods. In terms of the information and training needs of both service organizations and their small-scale producer clients, the importance rankings ranged from 43 percent to 60 percent. For the six alternative products of interest, there is little difference (a maximum spread of 7 percentage points) in terms of perceived importance for the respondent's own organization and its clientele. Only for marketing organic products is the difference in the means significant at the 0.05 level (see Appendix B). Thus, information and training needs in organic marketing are perceived as more important for clients than for service providers themselves.

Table 4: Information and Training Needs in Marketing Alternatively Produced Products

	Percent ranking important/very important		
	For service organizations	**For small-scale producer clients**	**Number of respondents**
Other environmentally friendly production	55	56	71
Reduced-chemical use	55	56	74
Free-range, grass-based or pastured livestock	53	60	72
Organic	53	60	76
Pesticide and/or herbicide free	49	53	74
Culturally traditional production	43	49	70

Table 5 compiles the importance rankings for 13 market development topics. More than half of the service providers who answered our survey (54 to 72 percent) believe that 10 of the 13 topics, including small business development, finding markets, product diversification/alternative enterprises, market assessment, farm records/budget management, pricing, food safety, product development, consumer education, and financing, are important in terms of the information and training needs of their own organization and its small-scale producer clientele. Product distribution, processing, and eco-labeling are ranked as important by fewer respondents, yet still more than 45 percent for each topic.

For most of the market development topics in Table 5, the importance rankings for organizations and their clients are similar. For only three topics, financing, pricing, and finding markets, are the means significantly different at the 0.05 level (see Appendix B). Thus, information and training in these areas appear to have higher importance for the service providers' clients than for his/her own organization.

Table 5: Information and Training Needs in Market Development

	Percent ranking important/very important		
	For service organizations	**For small-scale producer clients**	**Number of respondents**
Small business development	72	63	77
Finding markets	67	70	76
Product diversification and alternative enterprises	67	61	76
Market assessment	64	62	75
Farm records/budget management	62	61	76
Pricing	58	64	76
Food safety	58	59	77
Product development	58	57	76
Consumer education	58	54	76
Financing	55	64	76
Distribution	49	48	73
Processing	49	46	74
Eco-labeling and other labeling	45	46	73

Table 6 illustrates the importance rankings for the information and training needs in four skills-building topics. Here, the differences in relative importance for service organizations and their small-scale producer clients, according to the survey respondents, are more apparent. For three of the four subject areas, organizational development, leadership development, and policy capacity, there is at least a 10 percent differential between the perceived importance for service organizations and for their clientele. For these same topics, there are significant differences in the means at the 0.05 level (see Appendix B). Therefore, these topics are viewed by service providers as having higher importance, in terms of information and training needs, for their own organization than for their clients.

Table 6: Information and Training Needs in Skills-Building

	Percent ranking important/very important		
	For service organizations	**For small-scale producer clients**	**Number of respondents**
Organizational development	70	55	79
Leadership development	66	53	77
Customer service	55	52	76
Policy capacity	53	39	75

In summary, Box 3 lists the top 15 topics, ranked from highest to lowest, for service organizations as well as their small-scale producer clients, in terms of the perceived information and training needs of each group. Two-thirds of the topics, and especially those in market development (e.g., finding markets, small business development), are common to both groups. Approximately one-third of the topics are unique to each group.

Box 3: Top 15 Topics for Information/Training Needs

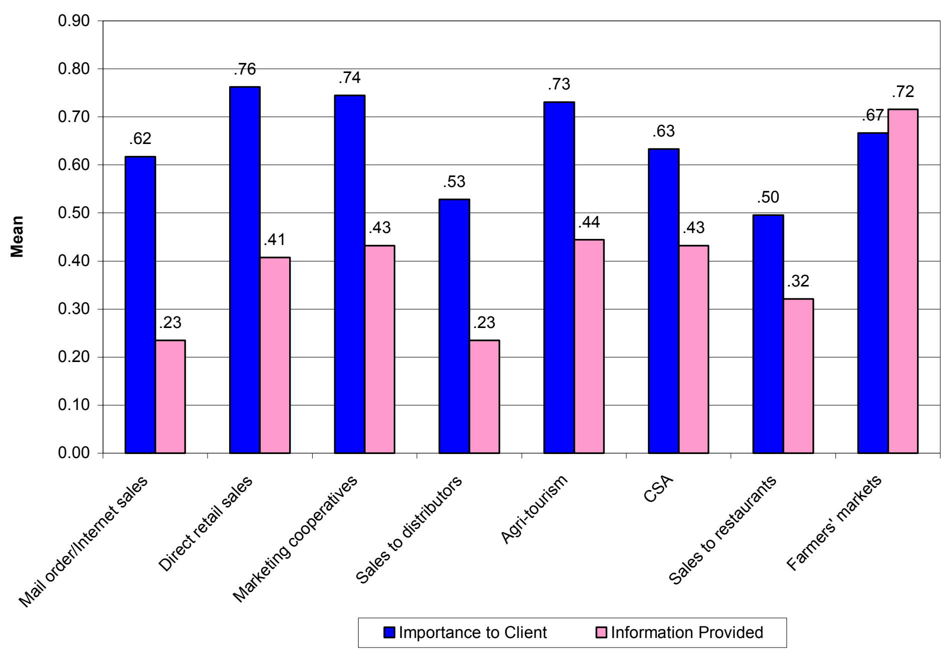
For service organizations	**For small-scale producer clients**
Small business development	Finding markets
Organizational development	Livestock feed products
Finding markets	Meat products
Product diversification/alternative enterprises	Pricing
Leadership development	Financing
Market assessment	CSA
Livestock feed	Direct retail sales
Meat products	Small business development
Farm records/budget management	Market assessment
Farmers' markets	Farmers' markets
Vegetables	Product diversification/alternative enterprises
Pricing	Farm records/budget management
Food safety	Free-range/grass-based/pastured
Product development	Organic products
Consumer education	Marketing cooperative development

Delivery of Information vs. Needs of Small-Scale Farmers and Ranchers

One of the critical issues we sought to examine through our survey is the connection between the capacity of organizations to provide information on specific topics, and the relative importance of information and training on these topics for their small-scale producer clients, as perceived by the survey respondents. To examine this issue, we compared the means of these two variables.[4] Figures 11 to 15 illustrate these comparisons, ranked according to the differences between the means for each topic. In most cases, for each topic, the mean for the organizations' provision of information increases as the importance of the topic to clients increases, implying that more information is provided on the topics that are viewed as more important to clients. However, for some individual topics, as discussed below, there appear to be some important gaps between the two variables. The higher the difference in means, the larger the gap between the amount of information provided and the perceived importance of the topic to the client.

Among the eight marketing options of interest, there are gaps of 0.29 or greater (ranked from high to low) between the level of information provided and clients' perceived needs, for five marketing venues: mail order/Internet sales, direct retail sales, marketing cooperatives, sales to distributors, and agri-tourism (Fig. 11). The gap is smaller (0.20 or less) for CSA and sales to restaurants. Among the marketing options (as well as the other topics depicted in Figures 12 to 15), only for farmers' markets does there seem to be more information provided by service organizations than is warranted, as indicated by the perceived importance of the topic for the organization's small-scale producer clients.

Figure 11: Marketing Options: Small-Scale Producer Needs vs. Information Provided



[4] To provide a meaningful comparison, the variables were normalized by dividing the values of each variable by the range of values for the variable. Dividing each value by the range recalculates each variable as V/(max V – min V), and produces more similar ranges. In this case, each normalized variable has a minimum value of 0, and a maximum value of 1. This process alters the importance rankings only (in the survey these range from 0 conveying 'no importance' to 3 conveying 'very important'). For the normalized data, the new importance rankings are represented by 0 (of 'no importance'), 0.34 ('some importance'), 0.67 ('important'), and 1 ('very important'). Details on the means, standard deviations, and mean differences appear in Appendix C.

Figure 12 illustrates, for 11 specific products, the differences between the delivery of marketing-related information by service organizations and the perceived needs of small-scale producers. The largest difference in the means is 0.49 for culturally traditional foods (Fig. 12). Smaller, but still important, gaps in the means (0.30 to 0.39) exist for dairy products, processed foods, flowers, food grains and seeds, and livestock feed. Differences of 0.28 or less exist for meat products, wool products, herbs, and fruits, with the smallest gap (0.20) for vegetables.

Figure 13 compares, for six types of foods and other products grown or raised using alternative methods, the delivery of marketing-related information and small-scale producers' needs. The largest differences in the means exist for goods produced with culturally traditional methods (0.45) and other environmentally friendly methods (0.39). For these products, the respondents perceive the highest deficit in terms of the perceived importance to clients and the level of information delivered by their organization. Smaller gaps in the means exist for four other types of alternative products, ranging from 0.22 for goods produced with lower chemical inputs to a low of 0.09 for organic products.

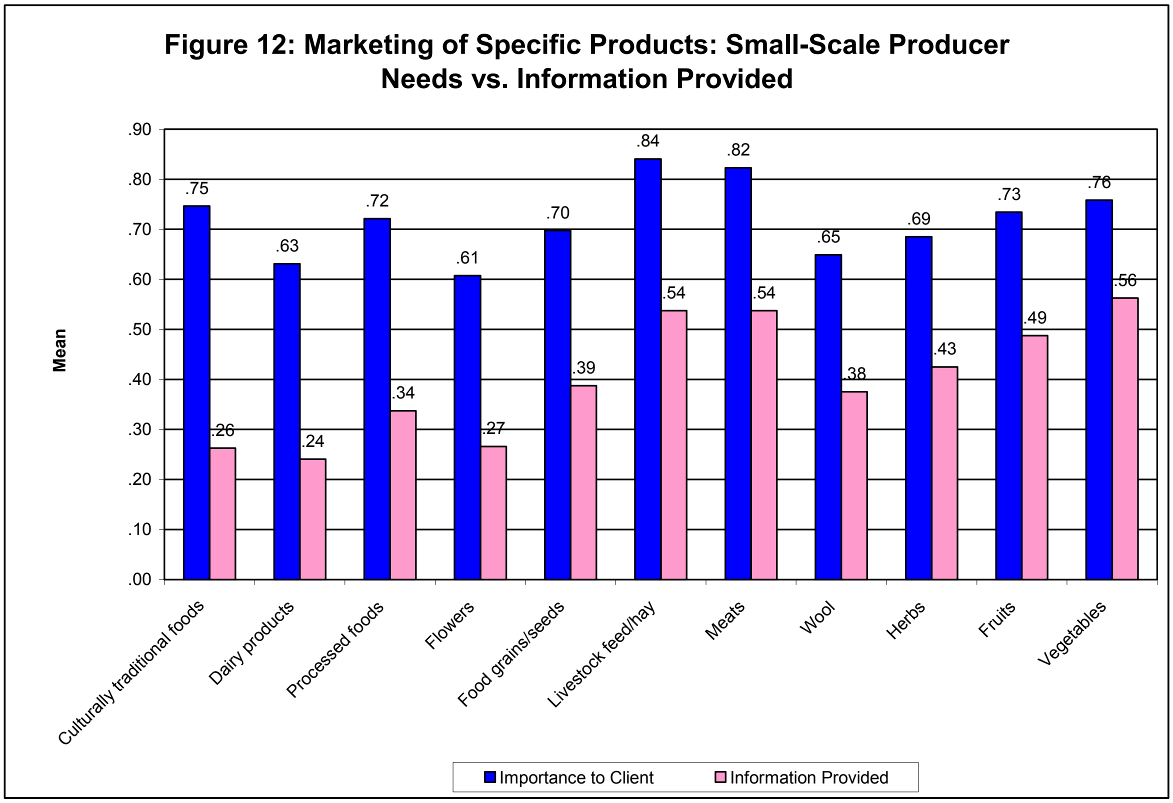


Figure 12: Marketing of Specific Products: Small-Scale Producer Needs vs. Information Provided
Mean
.90
.80
.70
.60
.50
.40
.30
.20
.10
.00
.75
.26
.63
.24
.72
.34
.61
.27
.70
.39
.84
.54
.82
.54
.65
.38
.69
.43
.73
.49
.76
.56
Culturally traditional foods
Dairy products
Processed foods
Flowers
Food grains/seeds
Livestock feed/hay
Meats
Wool
Herbs
Fruits
Vegetables
Importance to Client
Information Provided

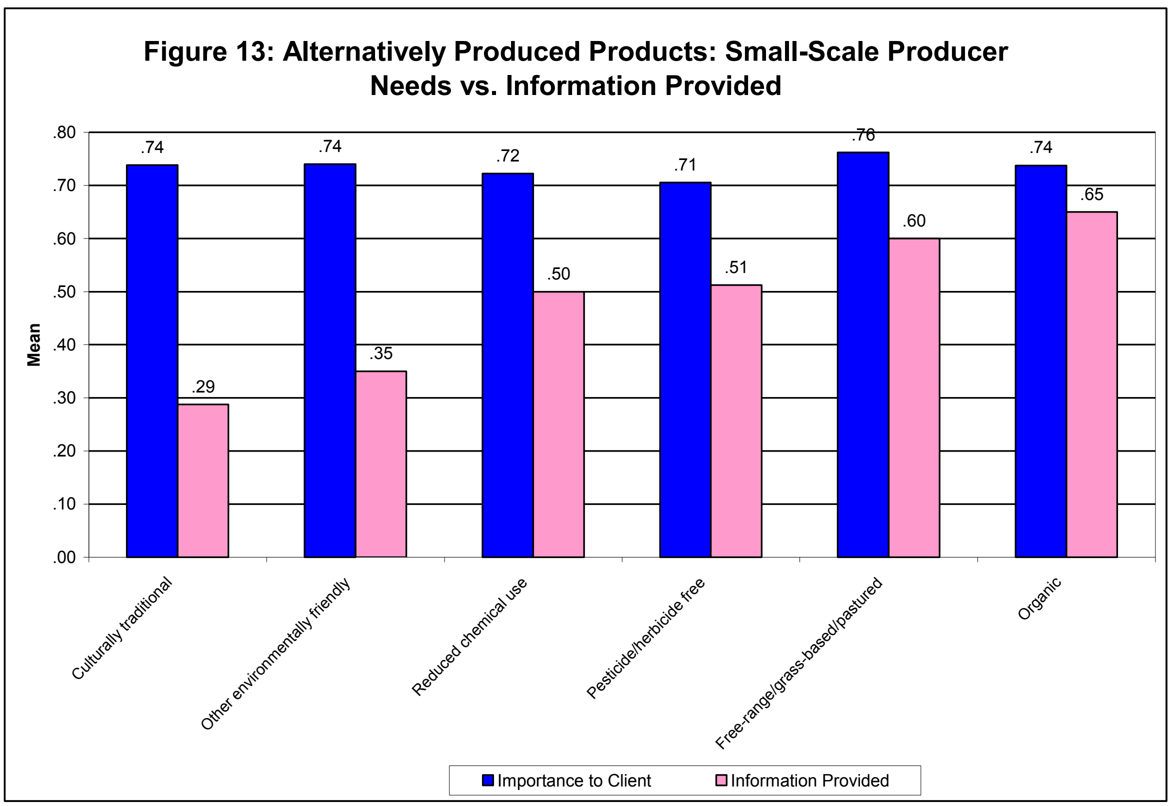


Figure 13: Alternatively Produced Products: Small-Scale Producer Needs vs. Information Provided
Mean
.80
.70
.60
.50
.40
.30
.20
.10
.00
.74
.29
.74
.35
.72
.50
.71
.51
.76
.60
.74
.65
Culturally traditional
Other environmentally friendly
Reduced chemical use
Pesticide/herbicide free
Free-range/grass-based/pastured
Organic
Importance to Client
Information Provided

Figure 14 illustrates, for 13 topics in market development, the differences between the delivery of information by service organizations and the perceived needs of small-scale producers. According to the service providers who answered our survey, for many of the individual topics there is relatively little marketing-related information provided given the perceived importance of each to clients (Fig. 14). The difference in the means is 0.30 or higher for 11 of the 13 subject areas, with the largest gaps (0.48) for financing, product distribution, and product development. Other important differences in the means (0.43 to 0.46) exist for processing, eco-labeling and other labeling, and pricing. For the remaining seven topics, the gaps in the means ranges from 0.38 for product diversification to a low of 0.22 for farm records and budget management.

Figure 14: Market Development: Small-Scale Producer Needs vs. Information Provided

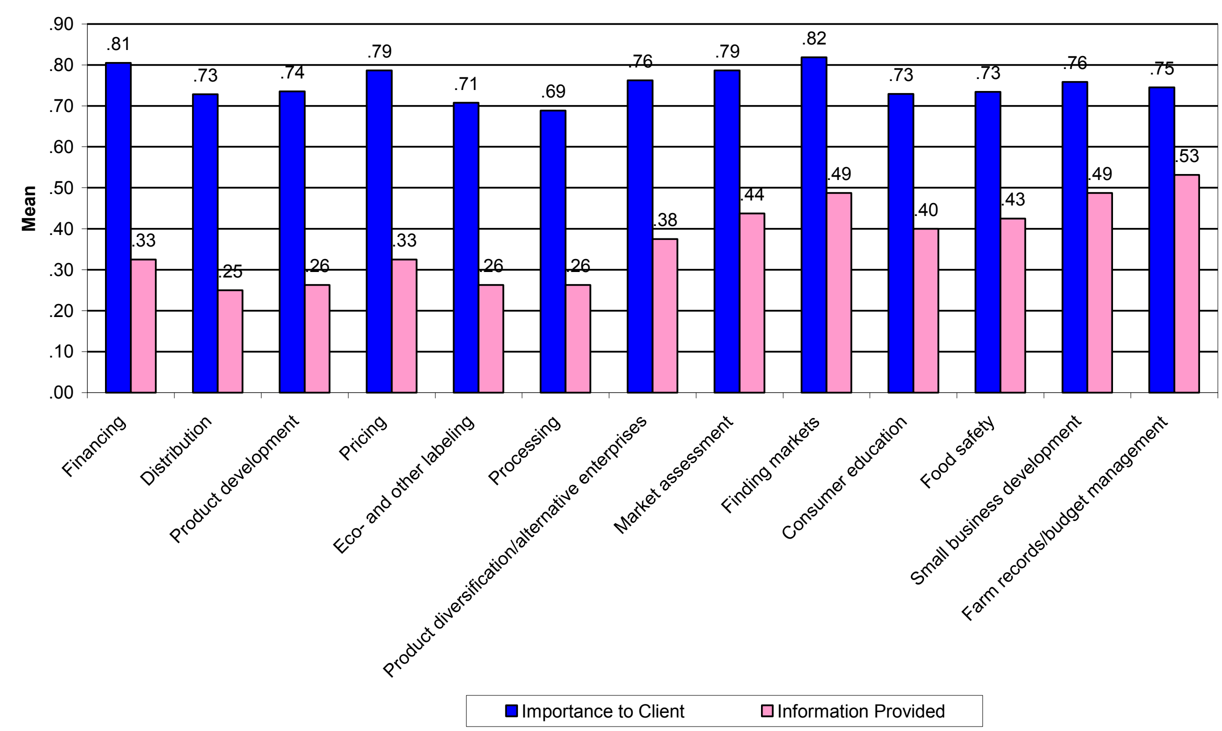
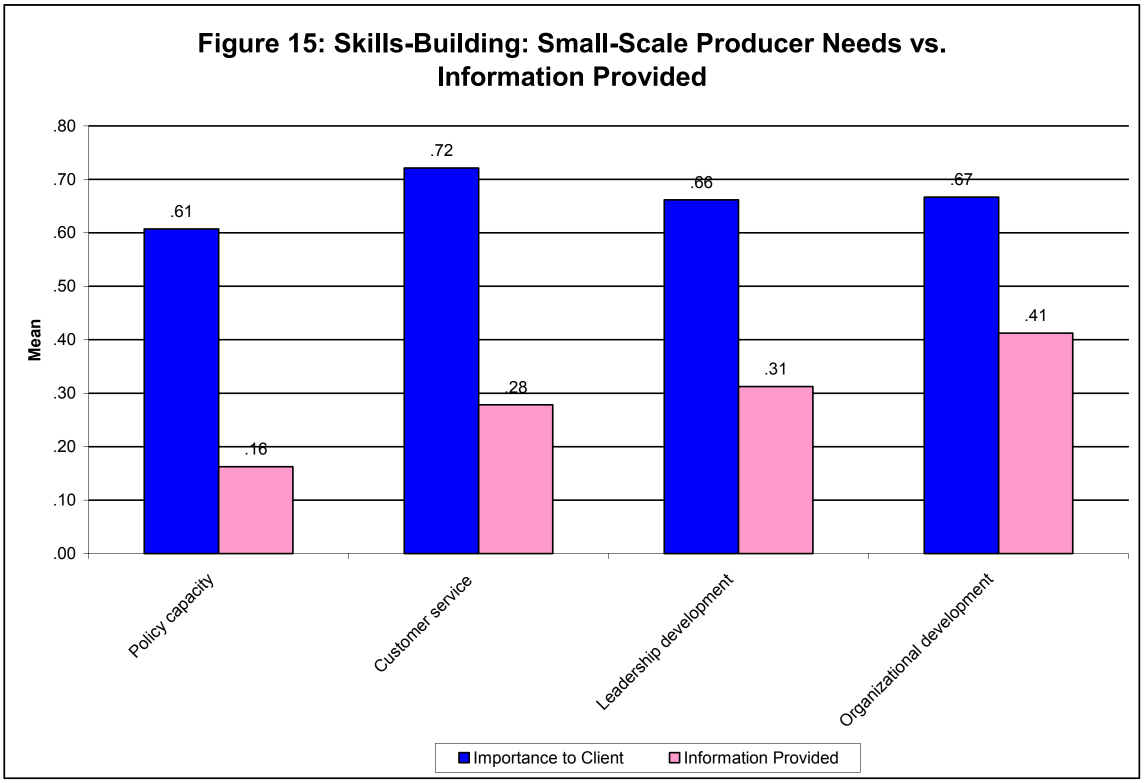


Figure 15 depicts, for four specific topics in the area of skills-building for improved marketing, the differences between information delivery and small-scale producers' needs. For policy capacity and customer service, with differences in the means of 0.45 and 0.44, respectively, there are important gaps between the level of information provided and the perceived importance to clients. Smaller gaps exist for leadership development and organizational development, yet for each the difference in the means exceeds 0.25.



In addition to the differences in the means as delineated by topic area in Figures 11 to 15 above, we provide a listing of the 14 individual topics ranked in the top third according to the gaps in the means (Box 4). These are listed by topic area, with the difference in the mean for each in parentheses. For skills building and market development, at least 50 percent of the individual topics in each category rank in the top third. Not surprisingly, most of these topics are also those for which the least amount of information is provided by service organizations (see Box 1, page 10).

Box 4: Topics with Largest Gap Between Small-Scale Producer Needs and Information Provided (Difference in Means)

<u>Marketing options</u>
- ⇒ Mail order/Internet sales (0.38)

<u>Marketing specific products</u>
- ⇒ Culturally traditional foods (0.48)
- ⇒ Dairy products (0.39)

<u>Marketing alternatively produced products</u>
- ⇒ Culturally traditional products (0.45)
- ⇒ Other environmentally friendly products (0.39)

<u>Skills-building</u>
- ⇒ Policy capacity (0.45)
- ⇒ Customer service (0.44)

<u>Market development</u>
- ⇒ Financing (0.48)
- ⇒ Distribution (0.48)
- ⇒ Product development (0.47)
- ⇒ Pricing (0.46)
- ⇒ Eco-labeling and other labeling (0.45)
- ⇒ Processing (0.43)
- ⇒ Product diversification and alternative enterprises (0.39)

Barriers and Resources Used in Providing Information and Training

To assess how the Network can best offer assistance to producers in the Four Corners states, we asked service providers to rate the key reasons, among a list of 12, why their small-scale producer clients may not be receiving needed information or training in agricultural marketing (Q14). Here, their responses are ranked on a scale of 0 (a barrier of 'no concern') to 3 (a barrier of 'major concern'). Table 7 identifies the percentage of respondents ranking the barrier as either a 2 or 3, thus a moderate or major concern.

The two highest-ranked barriers, as perceived by service providers, are taking time off from farm or ranch work, scored by 77 percent as a moderate or major concern, and lack of producer interest in changing their operation, scored similarly by 73 percent (Table 7). Other highly ranked concerns are lack of awareness of training opportunities (cited by 67 percent), excessive travel time and expense (63 percent), and taking time from care of child/family member (60 percent). About half of the survey respondents ranked excessive cost of training (54 percent), lack of interest (52 percent), or access to computer and/or Internet (47 percent) as important concerns. Fewer respondents, although still more than one in five, cited lack of cultural relevance in training (39 percent), training opportunities ill-fitted to needs (38 percent), literacy barriers (26 percent), or language barriers (22 percent).

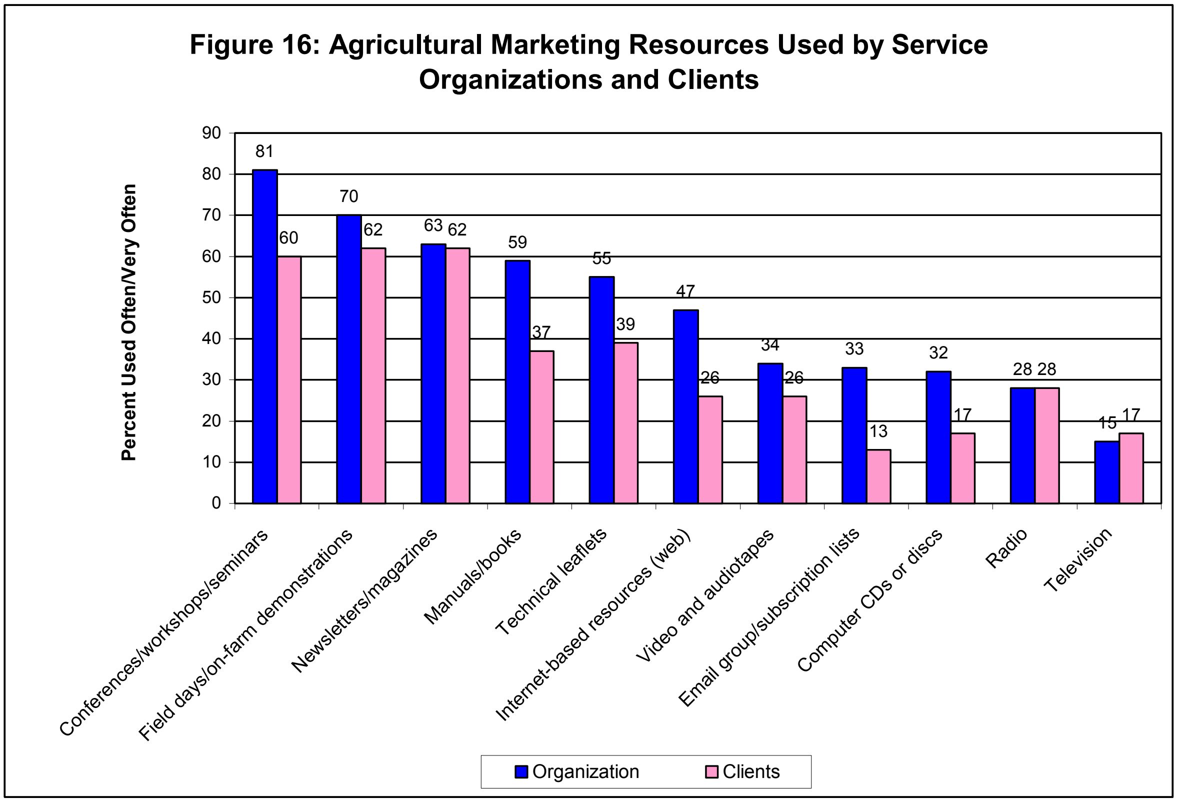
Table 7: Barriers in Delivering Information and Training to Small-Scale Producers

	Percent ranking as moderate/major concern
Taking time off from farm/ranch work	77
Lack of interest in changing their operation	73
Lack of awareness of training opportunities	67
Excessive travel time and expense	63
Taking time from care of child/family member	60
Excessive cost of training	54
Lack of interest	52
Access to computer and/or Internet	47
Lack of cultural relevance in training	39
Training opportunities do not fit needs	38
Literacy barriers	26
Language barriers	22

Question 15 asked service providers to identify, from a list of 11 items, which resources their organization, and also their small-scale producer clients, utilize most often when seeking information or training in agricultural marketing. The respondents rated each resource on a scale of 0 ('never used') to 3 (used 'very often'). Figure 16 provides the combined percentages of those who have ranked each resource as used 'often' (2) or 'very often' (3).

Over 60 percent of respondents (60 to 81 percent) rated conferences, field days/demonstrations, and newsletters/magazines as important resources for assistance in agricultural marketing for their own organization or for its small-scale producer clients (Fig. 16). About one-half (47 to 59 percent) use manuals/books, technical leaflets, or Internet (Web) resources to serve their own organization, and 26 to 39 percent view these resources as important for their clients also. About a third (28 to 34 percent) reported that video/audiotapes, email subscription lists, computer CDs/discs, or radio are used often or very often by their own organization, while 13 to 28 percent similarly perceive these resources as important for their clients. Only 15 percent view television as important in providing marketing-related assistance to their own organization, and only 17 percent identify it as an important resource for their clients.

Among the 11 types of resources, the largest point spread (over 20 percentage points) occurred with conferences/workshops, manuals/books, and two forms of Internet-based computer resources—the Web and email lists (Fig. 15). Therefore, according to the service providers who answered our survey, these resources are utilized more often by their organizations than by their small-scale producer clients.



Key Agricultural Marketing Issues and Trends in the Four Corners States

In Section IV of the survey, we wanted to gain the viewpoints of service providers on key agricultural marketing issues and trends for small-scale producers in the Four Corners states. Question 20 asked whether the use of six direct-marketing approaches had changed for producers in their area over the prior 5-year period. More than two-thirds reported that the use of farmers' markets (69 percent) and agri-tourism (68 percent) had increased (Table 8). Fewer, though still more than half, believe that on-farm/ranch sales (58 percent) and mail/Internet sales (54 percent) increased during this period. Less than half believe that sales to restaurants (48 percent) and CSA operations (36 percent) had increased.

Table 8: Direct Marketing Approaches: Change in Use by Small-Scale Producers in Prior 5-Year Period

	Percentage of Respondents			
	Increased	**Stayed the same**	**Decreased**	**Don't know**
Farmers' markets	69%	20%	7%	4%
Agri-tourism	68%	19%	4%	9%
On-farm/ranch sales	58%	33%	2%	8%
Mail/Internet sales	54%	30%	0%	16%
Restaurant sales	48%	37%	7%	9%
CSA	36%	43%	11%	10%

Few service providers reported a decrease in any of the six direct-marketing channels in the preceding 5-year period (Table 8). For CSA operations, the highest proportion of survey respondents, 21 percent, believe that this marketing channel had either decreased or they were uncertain how the numbers had changed. The smaller increases for restaurant sales and CSA could signify a number of possible barriers, including lack of assistance from service providers; high turnover rates; or more limited opportunities to use these types of marketing venues, especially in rural areas.

Question 18 was an open-ended (or 'fill-in') question asking service providers to name the key concerns in agricultural marketing for small-scale farmers and ranchers in the Four Corners states. We grouped the responses into categories for analysis. Table 9 lists the 22 key issues mentioned by two or more respondents. Market access/niche marketing, transportation needs and distribution, and distance to markets/remoteness were the three topics mentioned most often, by 13 to 17 percent of respondents. Five percent or more cited another six key issues: water resources; market assessment; competition with larger producers/distributors or low-quantity production; low prices received by producers; regulatory compliance; and processing capacity. Thirteen additional topics in agricultural marketing were perceived as key issues for their clients by 2 to 3 percent of respondents.

Table 9: Key Agricultural Marketing Concerns for Small-Scale Producers in the Four Corners States

Issue	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Market access/niche marketing	15	17%
Transportation needs and distribution	12	14%
Distance to markets/remoteness	11	13%
Water resources	7	8%
Market assessment	7	8%
Competition with larger producers/distributors; low-quantity production	6	7%
Low prices received by producers	5	6%
Regulatory compliance	5	6%
Processing capacity	4	5%
Lack of interest in trying new marketing approaches	3	3%
Consistent quality (quality control)	3	3%
Business planning	2	2%
Cooperative/pool marketing	2	2%
Knowledge of opportunities	2	2%
Lack of consumer awareness	2	2%
Diversification	2	2%
Labor needs	2	2%
Promotion of product	2	2%
No support from government	2	2%
High price of agricultural lands; development pressures	2	2%
Lack of marketing skills	2	2%
Product development needs	2	2%

CHAPTER FOUR

Summary

The purpose of the Southwest Marketing Network is to ensure that new, existing, and prospective producers in the southwestern U.S.—especially small-scale, alternative, and minority farmers and ranchers—have the necessary connections, technical and financial assistance, marketing information, business and marketing skills, and peer examples that will improve their profits and viability. Access to appropriate information and training for producers in the Four Corners states, and also for service organizations active in the region, is essential to this goal.

To evaluate possible information and training needs within the Four Corners states, the Network surveyed service providers to assess their own organization's capacity to provide assistance in agricultural marketing to small-scale producers, and to gain their views on the information and training needs of their organization, and of their small-scale producer clients, on a number of topics related to agricultural marketing.

Eighty-seven service providers participated in the survey. The majority of respondents serve a local clientele—either a one-county or multi-county area—and a variety of institutions, from farmers' markets and retail businesses to restaurants and cooperatives. Almost half of their clients have farms or ranches smaller than 100 acres and almost 80 percent have gross annual farm sales under $100,000. One-in-five has an operation of 1,000 or more acres. On average, 38 percent of the respondents' clients are minorities, and 28 percent use alternative methods of production, such as organic, free-range, or pesticide-free production.

We asked the service providers to indicate whether their organizations provide information or training on over 40 marketing-related topics, and to tell us about the relative importance of these topics for their organization and its small-scale producer clients. For our purposes, information was defined as "data presented in some way (e.g., leaflet, handbook, over the telephone) that is provided to your members/clients" and training was defined as "instruction (either in person or by a trainer or through self-training using training modules) to develop proficiency in a topic." The survey recipients were asked to rank the need for information and training on the same topics—first, the needs of their organization, and then of their producer clients. A few notable observations follow:

⇒ Except in a few instances, information is provided by the service organizations at a rate of more than twice that of training.

⇒ Not surprisingly, for most of the individual topics except those related to skills-building, service providers indicated a greater need for information and training for their small-scale producer clients than for their own organizations. However, on only 10 topics were there significant differences between the perceived needs of the organization and its clients.

⇒ On the whole, the level of information provided by service organizations on a given topic increases as the perceived importance of the topic to clients increases. However, for some individual topics, the number of service organizations providing assistance is relatively low compared to the perceived importance to small-scale producer clients, indicating a gap in information delivery. The top 10 topics fitting this description include financing, distribution, product development, culturally traditional foods and other products, pricing, eco-labeling and other labeling, policy capacity, customer service, processing, and dairy products. Because of the gaps indicated in this analysis, these topics seem to warrant special attention by service organizations.

The service providers who answered our survey believe that the two largest barriers for their small-scale producer clients, in terms of gaining the assistance they need, are taking time off from farm or ranch work and lack of producer interest in changing their operations. However, all of the barriers listed were ranked as moderate or major concerns by at least 20 percent of respondents, and thus warrant attention in planning assistance programs.

In regard to the resources used most often to obtain information and training in agricultural marketing, we found differences between service providers and what they report for their small-scale producer clients. Computer-based resources, books and manuals, and conferences are used considerably more often by service organizations than by their clients. For both groups, however, conferences, workshops, and on-farm events top the list.

Those whom we surveyed believe that most of the direct marketing options we listed (including farmers' markets, agri-tourism, on-farm/ranch sales) had increased in usage over the prior 5-year period in the Four Corners states. Two exceptions are restaurant sales and CSA, which, according to those surveyed, had not expanded at the same level as the other alternative marketing approaches.

In terms of marketing issues within the region, although service providers note a variety of concerns, market access/niche marketing, transportation, and distance to markets are the major ones. Interestingly, these were the same issues identified by the initial group that gathered in 1999 to discuss marketing issues in the region (and that subsequently led to the creation of the Southwest Marketing Network). Cleary, these key issues continue to demand creative solutions.

The survey is not representative of all service providers in the region, and, so far, there is no survey of farmers and ranchers themselves to compare with the perceptions of service providers regarding their clients' needs. Despite this, we believe that the results identify many interests and needs in agricultural marketing for small-scale producers in the Four Corners states.

The survey results outlined in this report are already being used by the Southwest Marketing Network to help plan the project's education and training efforts. The intent of this publication is to give other service organizations—those within and outside the Four Corners states—information that can help them in their planning as well. We hope that these results will help bring more resources and attention to bear on the important agricultural marketing needs of the small-scale farmers and ranchers in the Four Corners states.

Appendix A

Service Provider Survey Questionnaire

Agricultural Marketing Training and Information Needs in the Four Corners States

Name of Organization/Agency: ____________________

Address: ____________________

City, State, Zip Code: ____________________

Phone #/Fax #/Email/Web site: ____________________

Name/Title of Contact: ____________________

I. Demographics of Membership/Clientele Base

1. **Please describe the geographic area of your membership/clientele base (please select the most appropriate answer and describe the area).** For example, if you are a county agricultural agent and serve one county only, please select the first line and list the county you serve. You should then answer the rest of the survey for that geographic area.

   ☐ Limited to one county ____________________ County
   ☐ Multi-county ____________________ Counties
   ☐ Statewide ____________________ State
   ☐ Four Corners states (CO, AZ, UT, and NM) ____________________ States
   ☐ Regional and beyond ____________________ Area

2. **How many farmers and ranchers are part of your membership/clientele base in this geographic area?**

   ______________ total in your geographic area (if your geographic area covers farmers beyond the Four Corners states, please tell us how many you serve within these states)

3. **What percentage of these farmers and ranchers would you estimate are operating with gross annual sales and a farm size of:**

Gross Annual Sales		Farm Size	
Under $10,000	_____%	1 to 9 acres	_____%
$10,000 to $49,999	_____%	10 to 49 acres	_____%
$50,000 to $99,999	_____%	50 to 99 acres	_____%
$100,000 to $249,999	_____%	100 to 199 acres	_____%
$250,000 to $499,999	_____%	200 to 499 acres	_____%
$500,000 and over	_____%	500 to 999 acres	_____%
Total	100%	1,000 to or more acres	_____%
		Total	100%

4. **Do you serve a specific target audience (e.g., American Indian farmers, women farmers)?**

☐ Yes ⟶ Please describe the target audience: ____
☐ No

5. **What percentage of the farmers or ranchers served in question #2 would you estimate are minorities?**

____ % are minorities

6. **What percentage of the farmers or ranchers served in question #2 would you estimate are involved in producing alternative products (non-commodity or other unconventional products) and/or using alternative production methods (such as organic, free-range, pesticide-free, and regenerative systems)?**

____ % are involved in producing alternative products and/or using alternative production methods

7. **How do you believe the percentage of farmers and ranchers producing alternative products and/or using alternative production methods has changed for your area in the last five years.** (please check the appropriate box)

☐ Decreased ☐ Stayed the same ☐ Increased ☐ Don't know

8. **Does your organization serve any of the following in your geographic area?** (please check all that apply)

☐ Agricultural marketing consultants
☐ Wholesale businesses
☐ Restaurants
☐ Retail businesses
☐ Farmers' markets
☐ Marketing cooperatives
☐ None of the above; only producers

9. **How important are the following product types to your organization's <u>members/clients</u> (this question relates only to the small-scale, minority, and alternative farmers/ranchers)?** (3 = very important; 2 = important; 1 = some importance; 0 = no importance; DK = don't know)

Fruits	3	2	1	0	DK
Vegetables	3	2	1	0	DK
Herbs	3	2	1	0	DK
Grains and seed for human consumption	3	2	1	0	DK
Livestock feed, including hay	3	2	1	0	DK
Meat	3	2	1	0	DK
Wool	3	2	1	0	DK
Dairy products	3	2	1	0	DK
Flowers	3	2	1	0	DK
Processed foods	3	2	1	0	DK
Culturally traditionally foods	3	2	1	0	DK
Other (please specify): ____________________________	3	2	1	0	DK

II. Organizational Capacity

This survey asks a number of questions about training and information capacity and needs. Training is defined as instruction (either in person by a trainer or through self-training using training modules) to develop proficiency in a topic, in this case an agricultural marketing-related topic. Information is data presented in some way (leaflet, handbook, over the telephone) that is provided to your members/clients.

10. What training/information does your organization/agency provide to small-scale producers in regard to agricultural marketing? Please mark an X in the appropriate box if your organization provides the information or training. If your organization provides training, please tell us if all or some of the training is provided by in-house staff by placing an X in the third box.

Marketing Options	Information Provided	Training Provided	All/Some of the Training Provided by In-house Staff
Farmers' markets	☐	☐	☐
Sales to restaurants	☐	☐	☐
CSA	☐	☐	☐
Sales to distributors	☐	☐	☐
Direct retail sales	☐	☐	☐
Marketing co-op development	☐	☐	☐
Agri-tourism	☐	☐	☐
Mail order/Internet sales	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify): ___________________________	☐	☐	☐

Marketing of Specific Products	Information Provided	Training Provided	All/Some of the Training Provided by In-house Staff
Fruits	☐	☐	☐
Vegetables	☐	☐	☐
Herbs	☐	☐	☐
Grains and seed for human consumption	☐	☐	☐
Livestock feed, including hay	☐	☐	☐
Meat	☐	☐	☐
Wool	☐	☐	☐
Dairy products	☐	☐	☐
Flowers	☐	☐	☐
Processed foods	☐	☐	☐
Culturally traditional foods	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify): ___________________________	☐	☐	☐

Marketing of Alternatively Produced Products	Information Provided	Training Provided	All/Some of the Training Provided by In-house Staff
Organic	☐	☐	☐
Reduced chemical use	☐	☐	☐
Pesticide and/or herbicide free	☐	☐	☐

Free-range, grass-based, or pastured livestock	☐	☐	☐
Other environmentally friendly production	☐	☐	☐
Culturally traditional production	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify): ____________________	☐	☐	☐

Market Development	**Information Provided**	**Training Provided**	**All/Some of the Training Provided by In-house Staff**
Small business development	☐	☐	☐
Farm records and budget management	☐	☐	☐
Market assessment	☐	☐	☐
Financing	☐	☐	☐
Eco-labeling and other labeling	☐	☐	☐
Pricing	☐	☐	☐
Finding markets	☐	☐	☐
Consumer education	☐	☐	☐
Product development	☐	☐	☐
Product diversification and alternative enterprises	☐	☐	☐
Food safety	☐	☐	☐
Processing	☐	☐	☐
Distribution	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify): ____________________	☐	☐	☐

Skills-building for Improved Marketing	**Information Provided**	**Training Provided**	**All/Some of the Training Provided by In-house Staff**
Organizational development	☐	☐	☐
Leadership development	☐	☐	☐
Policy capacity	☐	☐	☐
Customer service	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify): ____________________	☐	☐	☐

III. Assessing Training and Information Needs

In this part of the survey, we want you to tell us about the training and information needs of both your organization and your members/clients.

11. **What priority would you place on each of the following topics for training and information needs in agricultural marketing for (a) <u>your organization</u> and for (b) <u>your members/clients</u> (those who are small-scale operators)?** Please circle the most appropriate number. (3 = very important; 2 = important; 1 = some importance; 0 = no importance; DK = don't know)

Marketing Options	**Your Organization**	**Your Members/Clients**
Farmers' markets	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Sales to restaurants	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK

CSA	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Sales to distributors	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Direct retail sales	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Marketing co-op development	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Agri-tourism	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Mail order/Internet sales	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Other (please specify): ______________________	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK

Marketing of Specific Products	**Your Organization**					**Your Members/Clients**				
Fruits	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Vegetables	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Herbs	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Grains and seed for human consumption	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Livestock feed, including hay	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Meat	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Wool	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Dairy products	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Flowers	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Processed foods	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Culturally traditional foods	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Other (please specify):______________________	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK

Marketing of Alternatively Produced Products	**Your Organization**					**Your Members/Clients**				
Organic	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Reduced chemical use	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Pesticide and/or herbicide free	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Free-range, grass-based, or pastured livestock	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Other environmentally friendly production	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Culturally traditional production	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Other (please specify): ______________________	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK

Market Development	**Your Organization**					**Your Members/Clients**				
Small business development	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Farm records and budget management	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Market assessment	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Financing	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Eco-labeling and other labeling	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Pricing	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Finding markets	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Consumer education	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Product development	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Product diversification and alternative enterprises	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK
Food safety	3	2	1	0	DK	3	2	1	0	DK

Processing	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Distribution	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Other (please specify):_____________________	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Skills-building	**Your Organization**	**Your Members/Clients**
Organizational development	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Leadership development	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Policy capacity	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Customer service	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Other (please specify): _____________________	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK

12. Name the single most important topic of training and/or information <u>for your organization</u>, either from the category listing above or in your own words.

13. Name the single most important area of training and/or information <u>for your members/clients</u> (those who are small-scale operators), either from the category listing above or in your own words.

14. Rate the key reasons why <u>your members/clients</u> (those who are small-scale operators) may not be getting the training or information on agricultural marketing they need. Circle the most appropriate number. (3 = major concern; 2 = moderate concern; 1 = minor concern; 0 = no concern; DK = don't know)

Language barriers	3 2 1 0 DK
Literacy barriers	3 2 1 0 DK
Lack of interest	3 2 1 0 DK
Access to computer and/or Internet	3 2 1 0 DK
Excessive travel time and expense	3 2 1 0 DK
Excessive cost of training	3 2 1 0 DK
Taking time off from farm/ranch work	3 2 1 0 DK
Taking time from child/family member care	3 2 1 0 DK
Lack of cultural relevance in training	3 2 1 0 DK
Lack of awareness of training opportunities	3 2 1 0 DK
Lack of interest in changing their operation	3 2 1 0 DK
Training opportunities do not fit needs	3 2 1 0 DK
Other (please specify): ___________________________________	3 2 1 0 DK

15. When <u>your organization</u> or <u>your members/clients</u> (those who are small-scale operators) seek training and/or information regarding agricultural marketing, what resources are utilized most often? Please circle the most appropriate number. (3 = very often; 2 = often; 1 = sometimes; 0 = never; DN = don't know)

	Your Organization	Your Members/Clients
Internet-based resources (i.e., web)	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Conferences/workshops/seminars	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Newsletter/magazines	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Manuals, books	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Technical leaflets	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Computer CDs or disks	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Email group or subscription lists	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Field days and on-farm demonstrations	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Video and audiotapes	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Radio	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
TV	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK
Other (please specify):___________________	3 2 1 0 DK	3 2 1 0 DK

16. What resources from the categories above, or in your own words, do you think would serve <u>your organization</u> best in regard to agricultural marketing training and/or information?

17. What resources from the categories above, or in your own words, do you think would serve <u>your members/clients</u> best in regard to agricultural marketing training and/or information?

IV. Marketing Issues in the Four Corner States

18. What are the key marketing issues and concerns in your geographic area for small-scale producers?

19. What types of small-farm operations do you think have been the most successful over the last 10 years or so in your area?

20. How has the use of the following direct marketing alternatives changed for producers in your area in the last five years?

Farmers' markets	☐ Decreased	☐ Stayed the same	☐ Increased	☐ Don't know
Restaurant sales	☐ Decreased	☐ Stayed the same	☐ Increased	☐ Don't know
CSA	☐ Decreased	☐ Stayed the same	☐ Increased	☐ Don't know
Mail/Internet sales	☐ Decreased	☐ Stayed the same	☐ Increased	☐ Don't know
On-farm/ranch sales	☐ Decreased	☐ Stayed the same	☐ Increased	☐ Don't know
Agri-tourism	☐ Decreased	☐ Stayed the same	☐ Increased	☐ Don't know
Other (please specify) ________________	☐ Decreased	☐ Stayed the same	☐ Increased	☐ Don't know

21. Please use this space to give us any further comments about your client/members' needs in regard to training and information resources in agricultural marketing.

22. Would you like your organization listed as a resource for agricultural marketing in a Four Corners states resource guide?

☐ No
☐ Yes ⟶ ☐ Yes Email: ____________________________
Telephone: __________________________

Our quarterly newsletter provides Network news, notices of new resources, and opportunities to participate in Network trainings, conferences, and regional initiatives. If you are not receiving our newsletter, but would like to, please check below and make sure you name and address are on page 1 of the survey.

Yes, please send me the Network's quarterly newsletter. ☐

Thank you very much for participating in the survey. Please place in the return envelope and mail.

Deadline for returning the survey:

Appendix B

Ranking of Information/Training Needs of Service Organizations and Their Small-Scale Producer Clients (Tables 2–6)

Note: Standard deviations in means reported in Tables 2–6 are relatively high, indicating variability in survey responses. Ratings were 0 = no importance, 1 = some importance, 2 = important, 3 = very important.

Table 2: Marketing Options: Importance of Information/Training for Service Organizations and Small-Scale Producer Clients

	Service Organizations			Small-Scale Producer Clients		
	Mean	**Std. Dev.**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**N**
Farmers' markets	1.8608	1.02	79	2.0127	1.00	79
Direct retail sales *	1.6282	1.17	78	1.8974	1.11	78
CSA	1.7143	1.02	77	1.8961	1.05	77
Marketing cooperatives	1.7838	1.09	74	1.8919	1.07	74
Agri-tourism	1.5867	1.13	75	1.6133	1.18	75
Sales to distributors *	1.3333	1.04	75	1.5733	1.11	75
Restaurant sales	1.4267	1.04	75	1.4800	1.14	75
Mail order/Internet sales	1.2400	1.01	75	1.3067	1.05	75

Table 3: Marketing Specific Products: Importance of Information/Training for Service Organizations and Small-Scale Producer Clients

	Service Organizations			Small-Scale Producer Clients		
	Mean	**Std. Dev.**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**N**
Livestock feed/hay	2.0133	1.18	75	2.1467	1.10	75
Meat	1.9730	1.13	74	2.0270	1.12	74
Vegetables	1.6892	1.20	74	1.7568	1.13	74
Fruits	1.4861	1.26	72	1.5833	1.22	72
Culturally traditional foods	1.5211	1.30	71	1.5493	1.26	71
Herbs	1.4028	1.12	72	1.5278	1.16	72
Food grains and seeds	1.5000	1.14	72	1.5000	1.19	72
Processed foods	1.2958	1.21	71	1.4648	1.22	71
Wool *	1.2740	1.11	73	1.4247	1.10	73
Dairy products	1.1528	1.08	72	1.1806	1.11	72
Flowers	1.0714	1.05	70	1.1714	1.09	70

Table 4: Marketing Alternatively Produced Products: Importance of Information/Training for Service Organizations and Small-Scale Producer Clients						
	Service Organizations			**Small-Scale Producer Clients**		
	Mean	**Std. Dev.**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**N**
Free-range, grass-based, or pastured livestock	1.7917	1.09	72	1.9583	1.05	72
Organic *	1.6842	1.10	76	1.8553	1.07	76
Other environmentally friendly	1.7042	1.11	71	1.7746	1.09	71
Reduced-chemical use	1.6892	1.08	74	1.7297	1.08	74
Culturally traditional	1.5571	1.19	70	1.6857	1.18	70
Pesticide/herbicide-free	1.5811	1.09	74	1.6622	1.11	74

Table 5: Market Development: Importance of Information/Training for Service Organizations and Small-Scale Producer Clients						
	Service Organizations			**Small-Scale Producer Clients**		
	Mean	**Std. Dev.**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**N**
Finding markets *	1.9079	1.13	76	2.1447	1.05	76
Financing *	1.6974	1.08	76	2.0132	1.13	76
Small business development	2.0000	1.00	77	2.0130	1.04	77
Market assessment	1.8800	1.05	75	1.9867	1.10	75
Diversification	1.8684	1.09	76	1.9474	1.08	76
Pricing *	1.6579	1.03	76	1.9342	1.12	76
Farm records	1.8553	1.10	76	1.9211	1.05	76
Consumer education	1.8026	1.14	76	1.8158	1.12	76
Food safety	1.7792	1.13	77	1.8052	1.10	77
Product development	1.6842	1.06	76	1.8026	1.10	76
Distribution	1.5068	1.13	73	1.7260	1.19	73
Processing	1.5676	1.15	74	1.6486	1.14	74
Eco- and other labeling	1.4932	1.13	73	1.5890	1.19	73

Table 6: Skills-Building: Importance of Information/Training for Service Organizations and Small-Scale Producer Clients						
	Service Organizations			**Small-Scale Producer Clients**		
	Mean	**Std. Dev.**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**N**
Organizational development *	2.0506	0.99	79	1.6709	1.02	79
Leadership development *	1.9870	1.03	77	1.6753	1.01	77
Customer service	1.7895	1.07	76	1.6974	1.16	76
Policy capacity *	1.6533	1.08	75	1.3333	1.04	75

** Significant difference at 0.05 level, using paired-sample t-tests, between importance rankings for organizations and clients.*

Appendix C

Comparison of Means: Importance to Small-Scale Producer Clients vs. Information Provided (Figures 11–15)

Note: Standard deviations are high overall, indicating a great deal of variability in the perceived importance to clients and the information provided by organizations to their clients. There is more variability among organizations that did not provide information on an individual topic than among those that did. To provide a meaningful comparison, the variables were normalized by dividing the values of each variable by the range of values for the variable. Dividing each value by the range recalculates each variable as V/(max V – min V), and produces more similar ranges. In this case, each normalized variable has a minimum value of 0, and a maximum value of 1. This process alters the importance rankings only (in the survey these range from 0 conveying 'no importance' to 3 conveying 'very important'). For the normalized data, the new importance rankings are represented by 0 (of 'no importance'), 0.34 ('some importance'), 0.67 ('important'), and 1 ('very important').

Figure 11: Marketing Options

	Importance to Clients			Information Provided by Service Organizations			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean Difference
Mail order/Internet sales	0.62	0.24	77	0.23	0.43	81	-.39
Direct retail sales	0.76	0.25	80	0.41	0.49	81	-.35
Marketing cooperatives	0.74	0.25	76	0.43	0.50	81	-.31
Sales to distributors	0.53	0.37	77	0.23	0.43	81	-.30
Agri-tourism	0.73	0.26	77	0.44	0.50	81	-.29
CSA	0.63	0.35	80	0.43	0.50	81	-.20
Sales to restaurants	0.50	0.38	76	0.32	0.47	81	-.18
Farmers' markets	0.67	0.33	81	0.72	0.45	81	.05

Figure 12: Marketing Specific Products

	Importance to Clients			Information Provided by Service Organizations			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean Difference
Culturally traditional foods	0.75	0.28	72	0.26	0.44	80	-.49
Dairy products	0.63	0.26	74	0.24	0.43	79	-.39
Processed foods	0.72	0.27	72	0.34	0.48	80	-.38
Flowers	0.61	0.27	70	0.27	0.44	79	-.34
Food grains and seeds	0.70	0.28	74	0.39	0.49	80	-.31
Livestock feed/hay	0.84	0.23	78	0.54	0.50	80	-.30
Meat	0.82	0.22	77	0.54	0.50	80	-.28
Wool	0.65	0.27	75	0.38	0.49	80	-.27
Herbs	0.69	0.28	73	0.43	0.50	80	-.26
Fruits	0.73	0.26	75	0.49	0.50	80	-.24
Vegetables	0.76	0.24	75	0.56	0.50	80	-.20

Figure 13: Marketing Alternatively Produced Products

	Importance to Clients			Information Provided by Service Organizations			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean Difference
Culturally traditional	0.74	0.27	73	0.29	0.46	80	-.45
Other environmentally friendly	0.74	0.24	73	0.35	0.48	80	-.39
Reduced-chemical use	0.72	0.24	75	0.50	0.50	80	-.22
Pesticide/herbicide-free	0.71	0.25	76	0.51	0.50	80	-.20
Free-range, grass-based, or pastured livestock	0.76	0.25	73	0.60	0.49	80	-.16
Organic	0.74	0.26	78	0.65	0.48	80	-.09

Figure 14: Market Development

	Importance to Clients			Information Provided by Service Organizations			
	Mean	Std. Dev	N	Mean	Std. Dev	N	Mean Difference
Financing	0.81	0.24	78	0.33	0.47	80	-.48
Distribution	0.73	0.29	75	0.25	0.44	80	-.48
Product development	0.74	0.26	77	0.26	0.44	80	-.48
Pricing	0.79	0.23	78	0.33	0.47	80	-.46
Eco- and other labeling	0.71	0.28	76	0.26	0.44	80	-.45
Processing	0.69	0.29	75	0.26	0.44	80	-.43
Product diversification/alternative enterprises	0.76	0.26	77	0.38	0.49	80	-.38
Market assessment	0.79	0.25	76	0.44	0.50	80	-.35
Finding markets	0.82	0.23	78	0.49	0.50	80	-.33
Consumer education	0.73	0.28	77	0.40	0.49	80	-.33
Food safety	0.73	0.25	78	0.43	0.50	80	-.30
Small business development	0.76	0.26	78	0.49	0.50	80	-.27
Farm records/budget management	0.75	0.26	78	0.53	0.50	79	-.22

Figure 15: Skills-Building

	Importance to Clients			Information Provided by Service Organizations			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean Difference
Policy capacity	0.61	0.26	76	0.16	0.37	80	-.45
Customer service	0.72	0.27	78	0.28	0.45	79	-.44
Leadership development	0.66	0.26	78	0.31	0.47	80	-.35
Organizational development	0.67	0.25	80	0.41	0.50	80	-.26