

# Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing Examples from Direct Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Enterprises



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## **Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing: Examples from Direct Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Enterprises**

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William Riggs; Ken Love; Rod Sharp

#### Introduction

Ramiro Lobo

#### Creative Growers

Gary Stephenson

#### Seabreeze Organic Farm

Ramiro Lobo

#### Nalo Farms

Stuart T. Nakamoto

#### Love Family Farms

Ken Love

#### Cattail Creek Farm

Oregon State University Extension  
and Experiment Station Communication

#### Rocky Mountain Beef Cooperative

Rod Sharp

#### The Holualoa Kona Coffee Company

Stuart T. Nakamoto

#### Sunfresh Farms

Russell Tronstad

#### English Farm

Rod Sharp

#### Schnepf Farms

Russell Tronstad

#### Mother Nature's Farm

Russell Tronstad

#### Southridge Farms

Dean Miner

#### Mebane Farms

Rod Sharp

#### Honeyacre Produce Company

Honeyacre Enterprises Ltd.

#### American Pet Diner

William Riggs

#### Thompson Farms

The Food Alliance

#### Harward Farms

Dean Miner

#### Summary

Ramiro Lobo

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## Preface

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In recent years, traditional commodity marketing channels have not provided sufficient returns for many small- and medium-sized farmers to maintain a viable livelihood through only farm activities. This publication examines how several operations in the West have migrated from a traditional commodity-focused business into a successful direct-marketing enterprise within the last 10 to 15 years. Declining profit margins that would not sustain their families' livelihood on the farm was the main reason that prompted these operations to consider direct-marketing and agri-tourism activities.

Even though direct marketing allows farmers to retain a much higher share of consumer food expenditures, the elements needed to make this production-marketing strategy a success are often not well understood. In part, this is because of their increased complexity as compared to commodity production-marketing systems. Albert Einstein's famous quotation that "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted," may seem all too appropriate when looking at what it takes to thrive at direct farm marketing and agri-tourism. Traditionally, commodity producers have set goals for high yields and low costs of production in order to be "low cost" producers. However, personality skills, relationships, superb quality and service, willingness to change, and general business savvy were also found to be key for the direct farm marketing and agri-tourism enterprises examined. This book is not intended to be a step-by-step guide on how to start a direct farm marketing or agri-tourism enterprise, but rather to identify the more subtle and unique factors behind the failures and successes of the enterprises examined and to determine their strategies for meeting future challenges and risks.

This publication examines 17 direct farm marketing and agri-tourism enterprises from the West and also includes introductory and summary sections. The end of each section provides contact information for the enterprises examined and for the contributing authors. The Western Extension Marketing Committee is greatly indebted to the willingness and openness of all interviewed participants to share the strategies, successes, and failures of their enterprises and what their plans are for meeting future challenges and risks.

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—Russell Tronstad

