

# Market Connection



Bi-monthly Newsletter of the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association • Vol. 10 No. 3 May 2005

## Farm Market of the Year finalists

Seaquist Orchards, a cherry grower, processor and farm market from Sister Bay, Wis., was honored as a finalist for the Outstanding Farm Market of the Year by NAFDMA. Dale and Kristen Seaquist accepted the award at NAFDMA's annual conference held in February 2005 in Boston, Mass.

"The Seaquist family is extremely honored to have been nominated for this award," says Kristen Seaquist. "This award has inspired us to continue to do our best in marketing the farm and farm products to our customers, and to strive to become even more qualified to bear the title of Farm Market of the Year finalist."

Dale and Kristen have been members of NAFDMA for many years. "NAFDMA has helped our market grow consistently over the past 20 years, as we have gleaned innovative ideas from the conference, along with learning from and sharing with our fellow farm marketers from across North America," says Kristen. "NAFDMA has helped us become the leader in the farm marketing segment of the tourist industry in Door County, Wisconsin."

Seaquist Orchards began more than 100 years ago in Door County. The family was a leader in

1912. The Door County fruit industry reached its peak during the 50s and 60s. Dale developed one of the first

mechanical cherry harvesting machines. It dramatically reduced the cost of harvesting and helped the Seaquist family prosper in cherry growing. While others left the cherry business, the Seaquists have grown.

Seaquist Orchards grows about 1,000 acres of cherries, 100 acres of apples and a few acres of raspberries, apricots and pears. Most of these cherries are processed at Seaquist Processing, where about 70 percent of the state's 15 million pounds of cherries are processed. The Seaquists sell fresh, hand-picked cherries to consumers at their farm market. Most of the apples they grow are sold through the farm market. Dale and son Jim are partners in Seaquist Orchards. Dale's wife, Kristin, manages the farm market. Jim's wife, Robin, manages the business office. Son Zach works with Dale on equipment maintenance, fruit harvesting

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*Kristen and Dale Seaquist accepted their award from outgoing NAFDMA president Richard Tanner. Above, Seaquist Orchards Farm Market, Sister Bay, Wis.*



the cooperative efforts to develop processing facilities that allowed fruit to be sold in forms other than fresh. Door County cherries were sold nationwide, and Door County became known as Cherryland USA.

Dale's father, John, planted his first orchard in about



*Debbie Pifer was on hand to accept the award from Richard Tanner on behalf her family. Above, White House Fruit Farm, Canfield, Ohio.*



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# Sharing! Sharing! Sharing!

By Mark Saunders  
Munster, ON



One of my highlights of my busy and sometimes chaotic week is Monday nights when I put on my Scouts uniform (yes, I think it is funny too!) and take my 5 year-old son, Aidan, to Beavers. Beavers are one age bracket below Cubs in the scouting movement in Canada. For 1 hour I am surrounded by 25 VERY energetic 4-7 year old boys. Sounds like fun? The meeting is loud and crazy but in the end energizing. It is 'guy time'

for the Saunders men! (With three women/girls at home we are outnumbered, so we've got to stick together.)

We start every meeting with a loud chanting of our motto, "Who are we and what do we do? Beavers! Beavers! Beavers! Sharing! Sharing! Sharing!"

My weekly Beavers meeting reminds me of the best lesson I have learned in business over the past few years—the more you share the better it is for business.

A couple of years ago I helped pull a few family farms and rural attractions together to form a marketing partnership called the Tri-County Tourism partnership. We received matching funds from the government in Ontario for our marketing and training partnership. While we were focused on the initial grant we knew there would be benefit to "partnering." We learned quickly it was not about the money.

Over the next 3 years as we created programs, did co-operative media buys and dreamed up new marketing ideas, a funny thing happened. We began SHARING; sharing suppliers, sharing brilliant marketing ideas, sharing concerns and even sharing staff. Our businesses that only years before assumed we were in competition, were sharing our so-called 'trade secrets.' Through SHARING we all saw benefits. We spent more time talking about each other's business challenges than time on the actual official partnership.

We developed deeper friendships and business relationships that went

beyond the marketing partnership.

Sharing! Sharing! Sharing! Naysayers may think, "But we don't want our neighbor to copy what we do."

A good idea is a good idea. It is the implementation that makes the difference. Every-

one will implement in their own way. For example, if there are two or five corn mazes in the same area, the prop-

*"A good idea is a good idea.*

*It is the implementation that makes the difference."*

erties should get together and market the Corn Maze challenge, or Corn Maze Trail and encourage visiting all Mazes.

Through sharing we learned a lot of new things about our business, most importantly—the more we get together the stronger we all are.

As much as we may like to think it, we do not possess proprietary knowledge in this business. We do possess IDEAS. The most successful IDEAS are the ones we share. Good ideas, when shared, grow exponentially.

Think of goat walks, corn mazes, mountains with slides, pumpkin cannons, merchandising and haunted hayrides. No two of these are identical...

So let's share more and who knows where that will lead us!

Action list:

**1. Get together**—Contact other markets, farms, attractions and complementary businesses in your rural community.

**2. Start small**—start with three or four partners. It will be easier to manage.

**3. Build trust**—Agree to share openly, act on good faith, but all info stays private amongst your group

**4. Market**—Implement marketing ideas that:

a. share customers, i.e. a passport or affinity program

b. share the cost of advertising by splitting an ad buy

c. leverage your media buys, through mass discounts. Media are more likely to give bigger discounts and better deals to a group of adver-

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# Random Thoughts on Produce Trends

By Debbie Pifer  
Canfield, OH

Throughout the year at our market, we often try to compare the trends we see in our business with the buzz of industry trends or trends of other areas of the country. Sometimes we are in tune, but in many other instances we are behind the trend.

## Example 1: WIC

Our county started an experimental offer with the WIC (Women, Infants, & Children) program. Each WIC participant received \$18 in coupons to spend at a qualified farm or farmers' market from June to October.

Because we were only one of two markets to sign up in our county, we received the lion's share of coupons redeemed. The coupons were redeemable for locally produced fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs. The coupons couldn't be used for California produce such as lettuce, grapes, etc. We grow

many fruits and vegetables, so the coupon holders could choose from many items, such as berries, peaches, apples, tomatoes, peppers, corn, cabbage, etc.

The first shocking thing was that we redeemed more than \$10,000 worth of coupons. I certainly didn't expect the volume of women who came to our market.

The second shocker was



spend on food for your family, are you going to buy mac & cheese at \$1 a box or a pint of blueberries at \$3? It seems to me that this is reality for many folks.

## Example 2: Prepared Foods

One of the things that I took away from the Pre Con Bus tour in Boston was the amount of prepared foods going through the farm markets we visited. Some markets

*“The second shocker was the produce items that the women bought.”*

the produce items that the women bought. They did not purchase many fruits! The items they asked for most were potatoes, cabbage, bananas, grapes, and lettuce.

These requests told me a lot about the diets of many lower income Americans. They eat a lot of starchy vegetables and lower priced fruits. There was no interest in berries or peaches—were these fruits perceived as too high priced? Perhaps lower income folks have never eaten these fruits?

We constantly talk about the health benefits of fruits—high in fiber, antioxidants, vitamin content, etc. Will many Americans never pay attention to the health benefits of fruits and veggies because they are simply too high priced and/or they are foreign to their diets? If you have only \$100 to

had full-scale kitchens serving full meals to go. It seemed like the prepared food business way overshadowed their produce and whole food business.

I came home and looked around our market. We do very little prepared food. I then compared the customers of the Northeast with our customer base. The Northeastern customers appeared to be young, affluent, time starved, and educated.

Some of our bus tour participants did a survey of customers in some of the markets. They asked them how often they shopped at the market and what they bought. Many customers shopped daily or twice per week and purchased meals to go.

I then looked at my customer base. During the week we cater to older folks who purchase basic fruits and vegetables, baked goods, and deli items. We cannot turn over many higher end products during the week because older customers are price sensitive and do not show an interest in prepared foods. We simply do not have enough young, upscale, affluent customers coming to our mar-

ket on a regular basis to make a go of many prepared foods.

I worry about being behind the curve, but if we can't make money yet it doesn't matter much!

I believe that there will always be a place for simple produce markets that offer quality homegrown produce. We may survive better in some areas of the country than others. Many of us do not have the skill, money, or desire for commercial kitchens. We must find a way to make money on what we do well—grow and market produce.

## Example 3: Fads

We recently purchased a freezer from a low carb store that opened six months ago. The owners bought all new equipment, leased space in a strip plaza, and planned to make a killing following the low carb trend. Six months later they were out of business. The trend died, and the big chains ate them alive.

What can we learn from their experience? Study trends, pick out the things that may integrate into your operation, but be wary of jumping onto the bandwagon with both feet.

I think that change comes slowly to most of our country. Let's make sure that our industry changes in tune with it.

## Sharing!

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tisers. They're also more likely to give editorial coverage to partnership than an individual business.

**5. Expand your horizon**—partner with tourism associations. Your partnership could be a product that your local tourism association can market.

Some marketing partnership examples :

[www.ottawascountryside.ca](http://www.ottawascountryside.ca)  
[www.visitthecountry.ca/](http://www.visitthecountry.ca/)

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# Familiar situation, fresh variation

By Carl Schwarzenbach  
Technology Assistant

## Jan. 17, 2005—3 weeks prior to NAFDMA convention

The phone is ringing. Again. And the fax machine is spitting out more conference registrations. Between the computer, the printer, and the phone, I'm getting more exercise during a few hours of work than a whole day at my three-floored high school. Trying to rush but not make mistakes, I need to get information ready to send to my A/V Team before the mail carrier shows up. Ah, yes, you've got to love conference time.

This year, the NAFDMA convention had a couple of new ideas: a choice of four different bus tours and adjusting trade show hours. But an even bigger step that probably wasn't even considered before was the idea of a small staff to take care of every detail surrounding audio/visual equipment and procedures.

Even though, for the past three years, one person from NAFDMA oversaw all the technical responsibilities, this year, there was going to be four people: one manager and three workers to get done what needed to get done to pull off another successful conference.

Three weeks before it's time to head to Boston, we decided who was going to assist with all the a/v needs for all presenters, but we had yet to finalize what equipment was going to be used.

The A/V Crew already had a good idea of what they were going to be doing, but as they hadn't heard of NAFDMA before being asked to help, they really had no idea what they were getting into. Lucky for them,

they had someone to manage absolutely everything and just inform them of what needed to be done. And luckily for their manager, they did what they were told.

Now, with the conference still a month away, the only thing that could be done had to be done by one person: Audio/Visual Manager and Speaker Concierge Carl M. Schwarzenbach.

## Jan. 31—1 week prior to NAFDMA convention

Things around the office are starting to slow down, but many things still need to get taken care of, not the least of which was securing equipment. Things were coming together, but we still needed three more LCD projectors, two more laptops and two slide projectors. Thankfully, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture and representative Mary Jordan graciously donated the much-needed equipment. Now with all the presentation apparatus accounted for, we needed to decide what was going to be where and when. Sounds easy, right? Well, with NAFDMA having nine rooms for sessions this year, planning things out wasn't so much a problem, but more a puzzle.

The A/V Crew was excited and ready to go; they each could not wait to go to Boston. Of course, this wasn't only because they were getting out of school, but also because they had some sort of interest in what they were going to do whether it was business management or computer tech work.

This team was young and able. Their manager knew they'd pull it off without a problem. For guys 17 and 18 years old of the "Technological Era," this operation was

going to be simple.

Still, the details...Not many people realize the amount of work put into managing a/v equipment. Conference attendees may just think that you put a random projector in a room for a day and the problem is solved. However, not all projectors or computers are the same, and the needs of each speaker are not the same either. Planning everything down to be perfect was going to take some work. The next few nights at the office were definitely going to be long ones.

## Feb. 9—3<sup>rd</sup> day of NAFDMA convention

The Pre-Conference Bus Tour was coming back to the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and now people had to double up on duties. The A/V Team got out of school early so they



portunity for the new guys to meet, greet and get to know NAFDMA Members.

The A/V Team had no idea who were regular members, who was on the board, or who were special speakers, but they treated one with the same professionalism and respect as the other. Having been part of three prior NAFDMA conventions, I knew a lot of people within the association, and they

*"They suddenly realized that they were in a good place with good people and had nothing to worry about."*

could make a final inventory check and get ahead of city traffic. Leaving the office in Southamptn, Mass., by 1:30 p.m. and making it to the Park Plaza by 2:45 p.m., they were already ahead of schedule and ready to do what needed to be done.

The four-man team checked into their rooms, unloaded the A/V Equipment in what was going to be their "Base of Operations" for the convention, and patiently awaited the arrival of the bus tour. With no a/v work needing to be done today, everyone doubled up and helped conference-goers with their luggage and questions. This was, by far, the perfect op-

knew me. I was making my rounds, saying hello to the people I have gotten to know and haven't seen over the year and helping the team in any way they needed it. It was at that point in time that you could see the team let out a sigh and relax. They suddenly realized that they were in a good place with good people and had nothing to worry about.

Even after they all relaxed, they still had really no idea what was coming up in the next few days. We had a meeting, and I gave them a quick rundown of all the equipment,, gave them a tour of the hotel and answered

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# Familiar situation, fresh variation

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any questions they had. Everyone in the room that night was more comfortable than they were a week ago, and their job hadn't even really begun.

## Feb. 11–1<sup>st</sup> day of concurrent sessions

Up at 5:30 a.m., downstairs for 6 a.m. with coffee in hand to run through some paperwork from the day before, it was easy to say that this NAFDMA convention was running smoothly on the a/v aspect. NAFDMA had never had a vision that things would run like this without a problem, but this was just another way to show how much NAFDMA is growing and taking form.

The team sat down for a morning staff meeting to touch base and push out any wrinkles that may be foreseen in the day to come. It was unanimous that the day of workshops seemed easy. If there was a problem in a room, the speaker or moderator would seek out a member of the A/V Crew (as it so conveniently stated on their uniform shirts), and if they couldn't help, they'd get on their radio and call for someone who could. Everything on Thursday went off without a hitch.

Today, however, was going to be different. Now we had nine rooms and four guys, equipment that needed to be moved to different rooms between sessions and two to three speakers in each room. This was going to be the most challenging without question.

All in all, there were a few snags here and there: a slide projector with a burned out bulb, a missing audio cable for the VCR, but nothing that the A/V Crew themselves

couldn't handle. They met in the Hancock Room when the day was over. The consensus: "That was easy, and Carl made us worry it was going to be harder than it was."

That was yet another turning point at the convention for me. I had my beliefs that everything was going to work, but there would be some problems. I knew the team could do it, but I thought I'd have to help them along a great deal because I've been there be-

*"They could do it and get it right, but they didn't need as much of my help as I was giving them."*

fore. I was right, and I was wrong. They could do it and get it right, but they didn't need as much of my help as I was giving them.

## Feb. 12–Last day of the convention in Boston

This was it; the final bang. Everything comes together today, and everyone is home free. Just like the day before, everything was soaring through the air without a bit of turbulence. But, as the end of the day got closer, things started to get hectic. The real test had just arrived, and it was time to see what was going to be done.

According to the planning with the hotel, the Hancock Room needed to be empty by noon. The problem was, sessions were still going on, and we needed a place to store our equipment and plan. But, there was no time to think about that. We moved everything to the Exeter Room and continued on the way.

While things were getting moved around, the team was responding to issues in various rooms: the speaker's presentation won't load to the computer, the room is too warm and the microphone

isn't working. And somewhere in between, the team had to count people in the rooms.

With all this going on, what happened? Well, the two days prior of training and conditioning paid off. Even with more to deal with, the A/V Crew had no problems. The closing session rolled around, and everything was winding down. All but one laptop was packaged up, and everyone piled into the Georgian Room to

bring Boston to a close and get Texas fired up.

After everyone went on their way, the A/V Crew made a final count on the equipment: everything present and accounted for. Now with all NAFDMA business at a close, they went to their rooms to pack up their own things to get ready to depart in the morning. The team had a well-deserved, good night's sleep ahead of them. Their job was done. Their job was completed better than anyone anticipated, especially their manager.

As you gear up for your busy season, and as you think about the approach you will take with your young, unseasoned staff, let me offer these lessons I've learned through this experience:

• **Plan.** You know what to expect, you know what works for you, plan something out. If you decide you want to try something new this year, plan out what you're going to do and how you're going to do it. The worst that could happen: you learn what doesn't work.

• **Check.** It's a new season; you know what happened last year, double check what you've got to work with. Walk

around your business and look at things like you've never been there before. You may just find an easier way to set something up that will improve the efficiency of your staff.

• **Train.** Again, you've been there before, you know what's up. Tell that to your employees. They may be nervous, but they'll have a better understanding and with just a little bit of knowledge, they'll be able to think on their feet better than you expect.

• **Trust your staff.** Of course, you trust your staff already, otherwise you wouldn't have hired them! They may be new to your business, but most likely, they aren't new to interacting with people. Or if you want a project done, tell them what you're *looking* for, not what you *want*. Give them some freedom on "how" and they will surprise you. Want to boost morale? Tell them you trust them.

• **Be proud** of what you can do. People like what looks good and what works and with the help of your staff, it may very well look and work better than you anticipated. Customers congratulate you on something, be proud. Whether you're out there to make a profit or help others, or both, help yourself; take pride in what you accomplish and what you know you did, and what your staff did. That's right, the staff that you helped build to what they are today.

*Editor's note: This article caps Carl's work for NAFDMA and White Loaf Ridge. His last day with WLR is May 31, when he completes his work study with us. He graduates from high school in June, then he's off to Army Reserves basic training in Missouri. We at WLR will miss him and wish him well. Stay safe, Carl!*

# Farmers' Market Coalition update

By Ed Maltby  
FMC Coordinator

The last newsletter introduced Nora and I to you as coordinators of the Farmers' Market Coalition (FMC) which NAFDMA has shepherded and grown over the last four years. The mission of the FMC is to "Strengthen farmers' markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers and communities." Who can argue with such a great mission!!!

FMC was born because of requests from a rapidly expanding industry and has grown out of the NAFDMA's culture of peer networking and sharing of professional ideas within their industry sector.

The NAFDMA board of directors recognized the need to establish a coalition that would satisfy the unique needs of farmers' markets and reach beyond the NAFDMA membership base.

NAFDMA has partnered with USDA/Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) since 2000 to provide the coordination and funding that is needed as a young organization grows.

The NAFDMA management team has worked with the FMC steering committee in the development of the organization, taking it from the idea stage to the election of a council in 2005.

In 2003, FMC held its inaugural meeting in Charlotte, NC at the NAFDMA convention. Its first annual meeting was held at the NAFDMA convention in Sacramento, Calif., in 2004 and was attended by representatives from 26 states, three Canadian provinces and the United Kingdom.

At the 2005 annual meeting in Boston, Mass., mem-

bers elected the first 15-member FMC Council, which then dove straight into more than 7 hours of council meetings during the NAFDMA conference.

The second council meeting took place in Chicago on April 19, 20 and 21. At that meeting, the Council built on

*"The mission of the FMC is to 'Strengthen farmers' markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers and communities.' **Who can argue with such a great mission!!!**"*

the work of the FMC steering committee and identified six goals for the coalition:

**1. To serve as an information center** for farmers' markets.

**2. To be a voice** for North American farmers' markets advocacy.

**3. To foster** strong state, provincial and regional farmers' market associations.

**4. To bring private and public support** to the table to sustain farmers' markets in the long term, for the benefit of farmers, consumers and communities.

**5. To promote** farmers' markets to the public.

**6. To develop and provide** educational programming and networking opportunities related to farmers' markets.

The council also established four committees and charged them with implementing the objectives stemming from each goal. These committees and their committee members are:

**1. Policy and Legislative Advocacy:** Don Wambles, chair; Richard McCarthy, Vickie Parker-Clark.

**2. Education, Research and Convention:** Tammy Bruckerhoff, chair; Bertie Wells, Patty Milligan, Diane Eggert, Randii MacNear.

**3. Funding and Finance:** Mike Bevins, chair; Esther Kovari.

**4. Long range planning, FMC structure, Membership, and Communication and Outreach:** Jeff Cole, chair; Andrew Stout, Janel Leatherman and Carmen Humphrey.

FMC has been functioning as a committee of NAFDMA, and the council

has chosen to continue with that relationship, benefiting from the support and experience of the NAFDMA board. The next year will see FMC do the following work:

**1. Sponsor and assist** with the 2006 Farmers' Market Coalition annual meeting and skills workshop at the NAFDMA convention in Austin, Texas.

**2. Plan and coordinate** five regional training and informational workshops.

**3. Establish an FMC communications network** by expanding the accessibility and available content at the FMC Web site at [www.nafdma.com/fmc](http://www.nafdma.com/fmc).

**4. Plan and coordinate a Farmers' Market Policy Summit** in October 2005 partnering with the Project

for Public Spaces and coinciding with its annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

**5. Create a media tool chest** that will determine what resources are available, identify experts and ensure that all presentations are in an easy to use format

**6. Develop** an FMC speaker's bureau.

**7. Work** with the Kellogg and Ford foundations, Farm Aid, Loyola University, Drake University, USDA/AMS and many others to bring increased resources to the farmers' market community.

**8. Build the capacity** of the coalition and its council to manage the business of the Farmers' Market Coalition.

As you can see from the above work list we have set ourselves a strong and positive agenda which responds to the ever growing needs of the FMC membership.

The number of farmers' markets has doubled in the last five years, and the council members and management team are committed to working hard to ensure great communication and representation of the industry's needs.

Talking about good communication, listen for Willie Nelson promoting farmers' markets on radio ads in our great partnership with FarmAid.

## WANTED!

At the 2006 NAFDMA conference in Texas, I will be conducting a session titled "**Employee Incentive Programs.**" I am looking to generate a list of programs that our members offer to their employees, as well as potential speakers.

**If you would like to share any information,** please contact Dede Beck either by email: [cider@ujcidermill.com](mailto:cider@ujcidermill.com) or by phone at 989-224-3686.

## INALIENABLE RIGHTS!

You'll find inserted in this newsletter a very important piece of paper. It's a ballot for the election of directors to the NAFDMA board. Please don't do what I'm so guilty of. Don't lay it aside, promising yourself you'll take care of it "tomorrow." If your desk is anything like mine, it will get shuffled to the bottom of a pile, and the deadline to vote of June 30 will come and go.

When I give school tours on our farm, I often ask children if they still play "let's pretend." Thankfully, they still do. I'd like you to pretend (this will work for women readers, but I'm hoping you men will read on just to humor me) that it's 1919. There's a really big election

coming up, but you're not allowed to vote.

Up until 1920 when the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was instituted (I'm talking U.S. here—sorry you Canadians and those from the UK), women did not have that *inalienable* right. So women, happily doing the laundry, would watch their men go off to vote. Apparently there were a few women, however, who just weren't too happy standing back, doing the housework. They fought long and hard for the right to vote. I find it sadly ironic today that so many of us—men and women—give up that right.



While our board met in Texas, we had the opportunity to attend a rodeo one evening. A few of us sat and watched the bull riding event. One particular bull just did NOT want to cooperate. He ended up at our end of the ring, where they allowed him to stay while the event went on. He pawed and snorted and threw dirt. He was not a happy camper. I imagine that's the kind of woman I'd have been back in 1918 or so, watching my man go off to vote. I think that's the way we should all view voting. It's an inalienable right. We should all be pawing and snorting to vote.

While electing your NAFDMA board of directors doesn't carry quite the same clout as voting for Warren G. Harding did back in 1920, it is still a very important duty that all of us should take part in.

At our recent board meeting in Texas, we brought four new board members to the table. Dede Beck, Al Rose and Mark Saunders all were elected—thanks to your votes. Now we have a new slate of candidates—all of whom have taken their responsibility to heart and have provided us with a brief biography. They are campaigning for our votes. Let's not let them down. Let's have a record vote this time! Don't lay it aside. Vote today!

## Farm Market finalists

*Continued from front page*

and readying Seaquist Processing for the busy harvest season.

Seaquist Orchards Farm Market sits 7 miles from the tip of the Door County Peninsula, surrounded by the waters of Green Bay and Lake Michigan. It's a popular tourist area that draws more than a million visitors each year. Many customers return every year to Door County—and to Seaquist Orchards.

White House Fruit Farm Inc., a farm market from Canfield, Ohio, was also honored as a finalist for the Outstanding Farm Market of the Year. Debbie Pifer accepted the award in Boston.

"Being nominated for the NAFDMA Farm Market of the Year Award is like making it to the Super Bowl!" says Debbie. "We are hon-

ored and proud to be nominated for such a prestigious award. Our family has worked very hard to be recognized for this honor."

White House Fruit Farm has been in operation since the early 1800s. The Hull family, represented by Debbie and John Pifer, owns the farm, which is located in the apple-growing region of Ohio. In 1924, Jerome Hull purchased 100 acres of the home farm from his uncle to grow fruit and raise his family. He and his wife, Doris, planted the farm's first apple and peach trees. They sold wholesale crops to area grocery stores and developed a retail trade on the farm. During the Depression, the Hulls and their nine children raised turkeys for extra income.

Doris and Jerome's only child to remain on the farm, David, had been given controlling interest in the farm by

the 1960s. David and his family exited the turkey business in 1968 to concentrate on fruits and vegetables. In the 1970s, David realized that the farm couldn't support another generation without a different business model. The transition from wholesale to strictly retail began in 1978 when the family renovated their 1881 bank barn to house a year-round retail market.

The 1980s brought many changes to the farm. Daughter Debbie and son David both joined the farm. David took responsibility for the apple and peach orchard, and planted strawberries and blueberries. Debbie's husband, John, joined the business and became a vegetable grower. The farm now grows 30 acres of apples, 10 acres of peaches and nectarines, 5 acres of strawberries, 3 acres of blueberries, and 30 acres of various vegetables.

They also offer pick your own strawberries, peppers and tomatoes.

By 1990, the Hulls had completely transitioned to retail. The barn evolved, with a third addition set to open spring 2005. Retail space increased from 3,200 square feet in 1978 to 12,000 square feet in 2005. Their product mix features home-grown and purchased fruits and vegetables as well as a bakery, deli, ice cream, fudge, apple cider, gift baskets and a large selection of specialty foods.

In the fall, the family offers school tours, senior tours, a craft show and harvest festival, petting zoo, and horse-drawn wagon rides on weekends.

Visit [www.whitehousefruitfarm.com](http://www.whitehousefruitfarm.com) to learn more about the farm.



**NORTH AMERICAN FARMERS' DIRECT  
MARKETING ASSOCIATION**  
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**Watch for the  
countdown to the  
Texas early regis-  
tration deadline!**

**WWW.NAFDMA.COM**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**June 16-18, Ohio**

Putting Local Food on the Table: Farms and Food Service in Partnership, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio. The second national farm to cafeteria conference features workshop tracks, plenary speakers and sessions for food service management.

For details, visit [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org).

**June 26-28, New Jersey**

International Dwarf Fruit Tree Association Summer Orchard Tour, New Jersey.

Contact Susan Pheasant, [susan@pheasantprojects.net](mailto:susan@pheasantprojects.net).

**Aug. 11-14, Massachusetts**

NOFA Summer Conference, Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass.

Visit [www.nofamass.org](http://www.nofamass.org), e-mail [nofa@nofamass.org](mailto:nofa@nofamass.org) or call 978/355-2853.

**Jan. 13-14, 2006, Texas**

**North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show**, Hyatt Regency Hotel,

Austin, Texas. In addition to educational sessions, outstanding speakers and a diverse trade show, the conference offers a three-day pre-conference bus tour, a day of workshops, and a two-day post-conference bus tour. The entire convention

runs from Jan. 9 to Jan. 16.

For information, visit the Web site at [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com), e-mail [info@nafdma.com](mailto:info@nafdma.com), or call (413) 529-0386. Registration begins Oct. 1. **Early registration discount ends Dec. 6.**

**Please vote—and nominate!**

**FIRST, PLEASE VOTE FOR ONE PERSON PER REGION**  
for the NAFDMA board of directors. The term will begin in 2006.  
The ballot is included in this newsletter.

**SECOND, PLEASE NOMINATE YOUR PEERS**  
for Farm Market of the Year, Farmers' Market Manager of the Year and Outstanding Leadership. Ballots were mailed in the March newsletter.

**Vote and nominate online at**  
[www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com).