



**Western SARE Program**

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**Western SARE Grant Categories**

- Research & Education
- Professional Development
- Farmer/Rancher
- Professional + Producer
- Graduate Student
- Sustainable Farm Tours

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## DEMAND FOR TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

### Situation

From a previous Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant conducted by project coordinator Teresa Showa, a Navajo small farmer's booklet was developed as a marketing resource guide on Navajo Traditional Corn Products. These products are culturally important and nutritionally superior to much of the food currently available and consumed on the reservation.

### Objectives

To build on the information learned from the previous SARE grant, this project sought to:

- Estimate reservation-wide demand for traditional products through a survey.

**Farmer/Rancher Grant**

**Project Number:** FW04-113  
**Title:** Ganado Family Farm Agricultural Marketing Study

**Project Coordinator:**

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**Amount Funded:** \$15,000



Kneel-down bread, shown here, is similar to a tamale and is often sold at local flea markets.

- Estimate tourist and off-reservation demand for these traditional products through a consumer survey.
- Initiate planning for a community kitchen that could be used to produce traditional products.

### Actions

Using seven contracted enumerators, the project team surveyed 1,900 respondents, Navajo and non-Navajo, to determine market demand. In the controlled survey, which included only those 18 and older, the enumerators handed out the survey, which was then filled out and

collected, or read the questions and listed responses. Two high school students were paid to input data into a spreadsheet.

The survey asked several demographic questions as well as specific questions about native corn products, including:

- What traditional corn products would you buy?

*...continued on page 2*



Dry steam corn products at a local market.



*Western SARE, a USDA organization, funds grants for research and education that develop or promote some aspect of agricultural sustainability, which embraces*

- *profitable farms and ranches*
- *a healthy environment*
- *strong families and communities.*

*The Western Region, one of four SARE regions nationwide, is administered through Utah State University.*

**Western SARE:**  
<http://wsare.usu.edu>

**National SARE:**  
[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)

## DEMAND FOR TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

- How much would you pay for them?
- How often would you serve them?

The Navajo traditional corn products are:

- kneel-down bread
- roasted ground corn
- Navajo cakes
- blue corn mush
- native white/yellow corn
- blue corn bread
- dried steamed corn

Another part of the project was to initiate a community kitchen feasibility study. A consultant specializing in community kitchen feasibility traveled to Ganado to assess the potential for developing such a kitchen.

### Results

Of the 1,900 respondents, 54% are women and 42% are men (4% did not specify). Seventy-eight percent are Navajo, most are between 36 to 50 years of age and 94% live either in Arizona or New Mexico. Fifty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they are the primary shopper, there are typically between two and five members per household and 87% are already familiar with native corn products.

Based on the products respondents said they would buy, the prices they would pay, and the frequency with

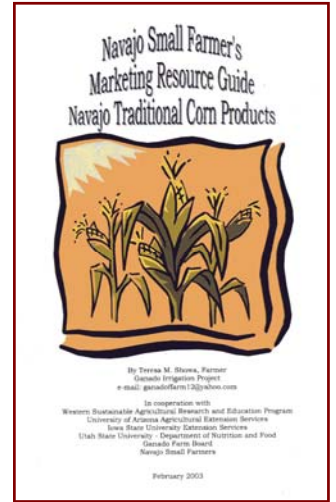
which they would serve traditional corn products, the market survey shows that the market for Navajo traditional corn food could represent an industry of more than \$100 million a year.

The most popular products, and their estimated annual market potential, are:

- blue corn mush, \$25 million
- native white/corn, \$19 million
- blue corn bread, \$16 million
- roasted ground corn, \$15 million

If this market potential were achieved, it could translate into 3,000 to 4,000 jobs for food producers (depending on the level of effort for each producer) and result in the cultivation of 10,000 acres of farmland.

Still, even though the market survey shows great poten-



The marketing resource guide was developed from a previous grant Farmer/Rancher Grant funded by Western SARE, FW00-325.

tial to generate income, Navajo producers exhibit skepticism because of the many variables and risks associated with engaging production, including:

- unreliable irrigation water
- the vagaries of weather
- production costs

The community kitchen consultant found excellent human and physical resources that could support a community kitchen that could, in turn, support these production efforts.

### Potential Benefits

The Ganado Family Farm Agricultural Marketing survey:

- Provides producers with more information on traditional corn products
- Provides credence to what many producers already knew
- Illuminates the potential of specific corn products.
- Shows that non-natives are interested in traditional corn products



A Navajo cake being cut from the cooking pit.