

Ganado Family Farm Agricultural Marketing Study

Teresa Showa – (Farmer/Rancher Grant Program)

Project Number: FW04-113

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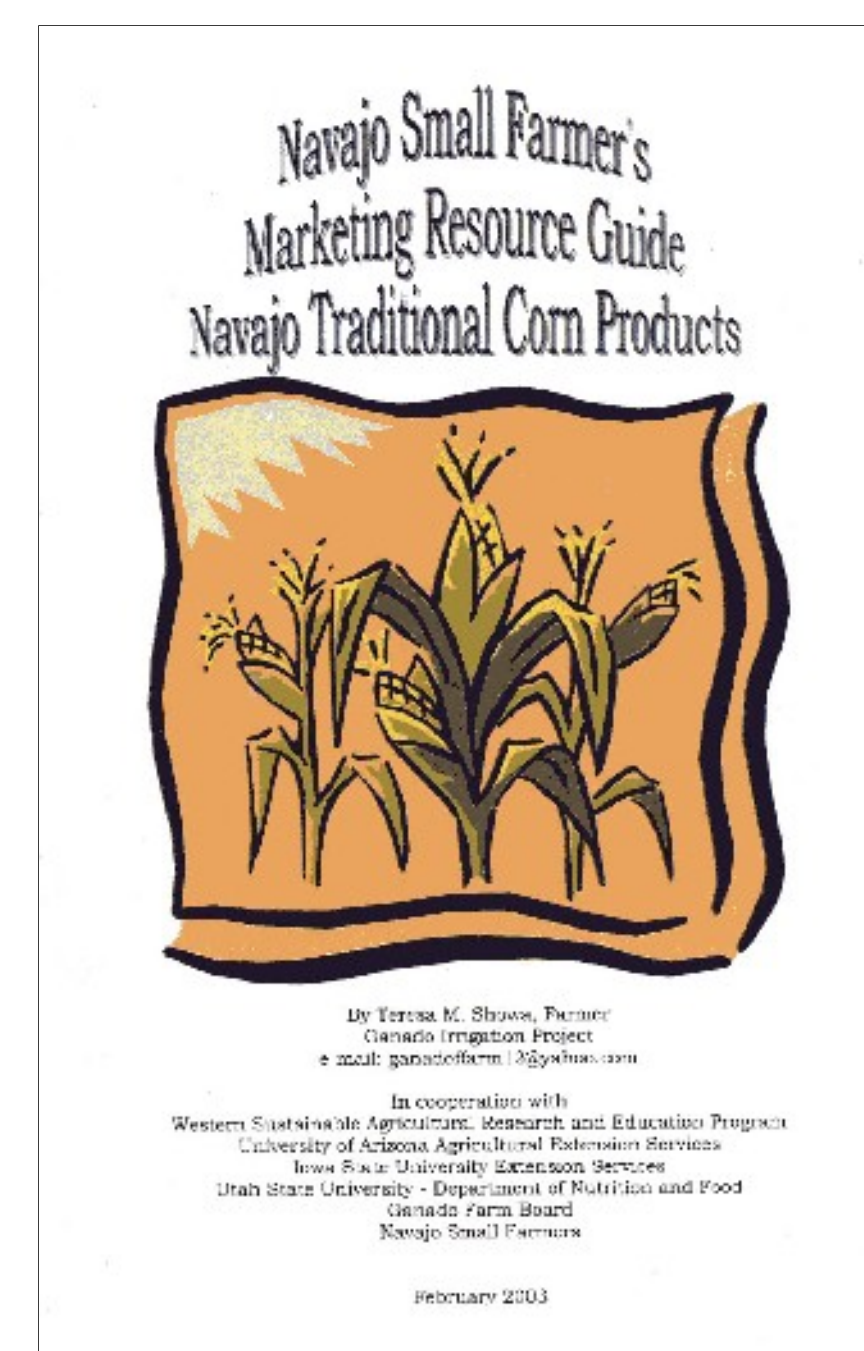
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The marketing resource guide developed from a previous Western SARE grant, FW00-325.

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.



Dry steamed corn products at a local market

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.
- 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.



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



A Navajo cake, fully cooked, being cut from the pit.

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 products traditional corn products would you buy?
- 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



Mixing a cake

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 results in the cultivation of 10,000 acres of farmland.

Still, even though the market survey shows great potential 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.



Grinding corn



Selling corn products

Benefits or Impacts on Agriculture

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.