

Alternative Agricultural Markets and Structures

Paula B. Ford

Regional Professional Development Program

North Central Region SARE Program

Kansas State University

Alternative markets and structures

- Background
- Why do we care?
- Alternatives 101
- Constraints and Opportunities
- Implications

Background

- Structural change in agriculture impacts entire sector from production to distribution.
- Structural changes bring environmental, economic, and social issues of sustainability to the forefront.
- Producers have always created and accessed alternative markets.
- Increased interest in the opportunities associated with alternative markets.

Why do we care?

- Safety valve for producers
- Mixed portfolios
- Innovators
- Flexible and responsive to consumers
- Reflective and predictive of trends

Alternatives 101

- Farmers Markets
- Direct on-farm sales (PYO, farm stands, etc.)
- Community supported agriculture
- Specialty cooperatives
- Direct sales to restaurants and specialty food stores
- Mail order and internet
- Value-added specialty

Constraints

- Lack of information
- Technical assistance
- Financing
- Geography
- Business planning
- Legal considerations

Opportunities

- Changing consumer preferences
- International markets
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Community development
- Sustainability (environmental, economic and social sustainability)

Implications for the future

- Research and education needs
- Producers and consumer centrality
- Identification and removal of constraints
- Sustainability