

USDA hopes for more roadside markets

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Do you long for the good old days when you could travel out into the country and buy locally grown produce at a roadside stand — or do your own picking of tree-ripened fruit at a farmer's orchard?

Those days may be back if federal and state agricultural officials have anything to say about it.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has been paying grants to states that devise innovative ways to encourage sales of agricultural products direct from farmers to consumers. Federal funds are granted under the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976, which runs through 1978.

By mid-April, USDA's

Agricultural Marketing Service and Science and Education Administration will have paid out nearly \$2 million under the Act in grants to 23 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The grants will fund 22 projects.

Here's just a sampling of the projects underway:

Arizona is organizing producers to sell their farm products directly to consumer cooperatives. Small producers are being organized to sell through roadside markets, and consumer groups in Phoenix and Tucson are being organized to buy directly from producers.

Georgia and South Carolina have teamed up to establish farmers' markets in Savannah, Ga., and Charleston, S.C. The plan is designed to bring small farmers and low-income consumers together at inner-city markets.

Colorado is working to set up open-air markets.

New Jersey is encouraging pick-your-own farms, where city people can pick fresh produce and pay by the size of the container — maybe even picnic while they enjoy crisp country air.

Florida is looking into ways to develop a produce market on wheels to serve heavy-populated areas of the state, like Dade County and Miami.

On April 11-13, officials from 23 states and USDA gathered in Kansas City to discuss progress in carrying out projects funded late last year and prospects for the projects funded this year.



Holding the lamb is Mrs. Kenneth Borry, portraying Noah and holding the dove of peace is the Rev. Frank Nickel, and supporting the calf is Larry Garber. All took part in the production "100 Per Cent Chance of Rain".

Noah's Arc filled with live farm animals

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Jamie Hilton, Wendy Rice, and Tracy Schweers.

Also included were: Bob Cunard, Beth Fackler, Theresa Fackler, Bobby

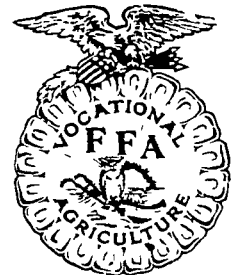
Fanus, Kenny Fanus, Melissa Geib, Brian Good, Cindy Greenly, Michelle Grove, Susan Hogan, Diann Longenecker, Joanne Manley, Vicki Zechman, Lynette Coble, and Becky Massa.

Those playing Biblical roles were: Brenda Cunard, Stefania Good, Denise Rosenberry, Allen DeWire, Dennis Rosenberry, Bill Schweers, Mrs. Carol Borry, Mr. Larry Garber, and Rev. Frank A. Nickel, Jr.

Others involved included Carol Saam, Stephanie Stauffer, Bill Chubb, Mrs.

Dianna Borrell, Mrs. Beryl Schmidt, and Mrs. Martha Stauffer.

Animals were loaned by Brian Crowe, Larry Garber, and Mrs. Kenneth Borry.



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