

1919-1987

Scrap Book

*San Luis Obispo  
County*



*farmers Market*

MON 8-20-79

# Farmer's Market: farmers, consumers mingle

By Alison Harvey  
Staff Writer

Elmer "Buster" Mehlschau believes he and his Edna Valley lemons are victims of large-scale marketing system.

Dave Chappell and his partners in a small sharecropping venture like to cut out the middleman and sell their produce directly to consumers.

Both, for their distinctly different reasons, are sellers at the San Luis Obispo County Farmer's Market, which will celebrate its first birthday Saturday.

Mehlschau, Chappell and the dozens of other participants in the direct marketing project can be found every Saturday, rain or shine, from 8 a.m. to noon in the parking lot of Young's Giant Food at the corner of Broad Street and Highway 227 in San Luis Obispo.

They offer a wide range of ripe, fresh produce at less than supermarket prices.

Chappell's tomatoes are priced between 25 and 40 cents per pound depending on size, and his leaf lettuce costs 10 cents a head.

Mehlschau sells his lemons for \$1.25 per dozen, less than half the going retail rate in markets.

The break to consumers is an advantage of such a direct market system, but for Mehlschau, the Farmer's Market means the difference between selling his lemons or letting them rot on the ground, as happened last year.

In 1977, Mehlschau said, he sent 21 tons of his lemons to the giant lemon cooperative, Sunkist. After the cost of picking, hauling and sorting, and after the lemons unacceptable to Sunkist's standards were discounted, Mehlschau said, he got a check for \$3.68 for his year's work.

So, in 1978 he let his lemons rot where they fell from the trees.

A Sunkist executive said such a poor price for Mehlschau's lemons is possible, because a grower's income depends on the picking,

sorting and hauling charges of the packing house and on the condition of the lemons.

When the Farmer's Market was formed, Mehlschau signed up as a charter seller.

The market was started by Manager Richard Sherman under the auspices of the county Economic Opportunity Commission last summer. It became independent in November.

The formation was preceded by a study that indicated a direct market providing fresh produce from the North and South County farmlands to urban residents could succeed.

Mehlschau said that he probably will sell his 1979 crop, of which only 25 percent survived a killing frost in February, through the Farmer's Market.

"The closer you can get to the consumer, the better it is for the farmer," Mehlschau said.

Chappell and his partners, Steve Chapman and Scotty Boyd, all agriculture graduates of Cal Poly, sell mostly to county restaurants and stores.

They figure they sell about 10 percent of their crop from their 12 leased acres through the Farmer's Market.

They like to sell there because, as Chapman said, "It's nice to sell directly to the people that are going to use it."

In these late weeks of summer, they pull about 450 pounds of produce off their land every other day, Chappell said.

All the growers that sell at the market pay 10 percent of their take for the management, upkeep the publicity of the operation.

They elect their own board of directors, which guides Sherman in market policy.

The birthday celebration will be during the market's operating hours Saturday and will feature the bluegrass music of the Friends of Ned Perkins Band, a drawing for a bag of produce and John Derho, who wrote "The Rocky Toad," an account of his experiences with an all-plant diet.



A Cal Poly tomato is given a speculative squeeze from a produce buyer Saturday at San Luis Obispo's Farmer's Market.

August 23, 1979

## FARMERS MARKET 1st Anniversary Celebration



SAT. AUGUST 25th — 8 a.m. to 12 noon

On Young's Giant Food Parking Lot!

(Broad Street & Highway 227)

### FEATURING:

Bluegrass Music By: Friends of Ned Perkins

### ALSO SPECIAL GUEST:

John Derho—Harvard Grad - Will be on hand to sign copies of his book "The Rocky Road" in which he recounts his experience with an All Plant Diet!"

### ★ FREE DRAWING ★

TO BE HELD AT 10:30 a.m. FOR A BAG OF LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE! Winner Must Be Present.

**farmers Market**

Every Saturday 8 a.m. - 12 noon Rain or Shine

## 1st ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Sat., August 25th 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.



## SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FARMERS MARKET

- BLUEGRASS MUSIC BY: The Friends of Ned Perkins.
- JOHN DERHO: Will be on hand to answer questions and sign copies of his book, The Rocky Road, on an "All Plant Diet."
- ALSO\*\*A FREE drawing! For a bag of fresh locally grown produce

Come by Sat., Aug. 25th and enter.

DRAWING WILL BE HELD AT 10:30 A.M.

WINNER MUST BE PRESENT

AT YOUNG'S GIANT FOOD

Edna Rd. (Hwy. 227) S.L.O.

1717 Tribune \$20

Fri 8/24/79

## Farmer's Market birthday Saturday

Bluegrass music will drift across the parking lot of Young's Giant Foods Saturday morning marking the first anniversary celebration of the San Luis Obispo Farmer's Market.

The market is held each Saturday, starting at 8 a.m., on the lot on Highway 227, and farmers and consumers meet to sell and buy farm fresh produce on a one-to-one basis.

Farmer's Market in San Luis Obispo began about July 1 last year as an Economic Opportunity Commission project under the guidance of Bill Castellanos, EOC community service director. The initial sale was held in August.

Castellanos organized the market. He made

arrangements for the location, notified growers through the media and settled the various problems as they arose. What financing was needed was provided by EOC funds.

His goal was for the growers to hire a manager and operate the market as their independent project.

The market expanded so rapidly, growers hired Richard Sherman of San Luis Obispo in November as part-time manager for the one-day-a-week sale.

Sherman has made arrangements for Saturday's birthday celebration, which will be held from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

"The public is invited, rain or shine," he said.

# California Agriculture

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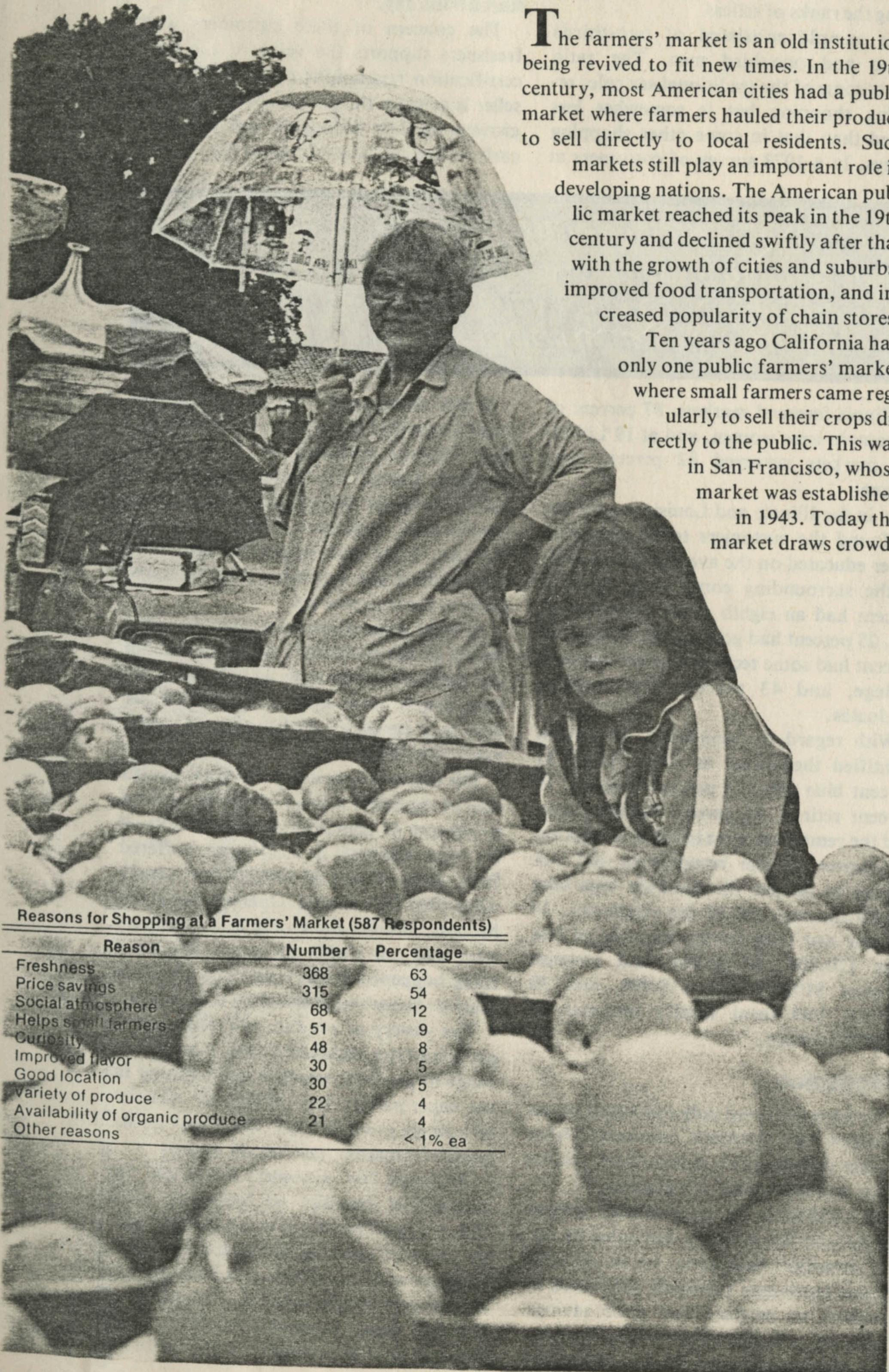
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University of California Division of Agricultural Sciences Reports of Progress in Research

# Farmers' markets please their customers

Robert Sommer □ Margaret Wing



The farmers' market is an old institution being revived to fit new times. In the 19th century, most American cities had a public market where farmers hauled their produce to sell directly to local residents. Such markets still play an important role in developing nations. The American public market reached its peak in the 19th century and declined swiftly after that with the growth of cities and suburbs, improved food transportation, and increased popularity of chain stores.

Ten years ago California had only one public farmers' market where small farmers came regularly to sell their crops directly to the public. This was in San Francisco, whose market was established in 1943. Today the market draws crowds

of 30,000 or more on a summer Saturday. For its 36th anniversary, there were strolling musicians, cooking and canning demonstrations, a beauty queen crowned with a wreath of garlic by the Mayor, and a "farmer of the year" award for the oldest grower actively selling.

Within the last decade, there has been a resurgence of community markets within the state and around the nation. In the last 5 years, approximately 20 community outlets have been established in California. In 1977 the California State Department of Food and Agriculture passed regulations permitting the establishment of certified farmers' markets, easing the standardization requirements on direct-marketing growers, and ensuring that the person selling was the actual grower or a relative or employee of the grower.

The new markets have been established primarily in central and northern California. Southern California has not shown such a response, perhaps because distances are so great. During the past summer, a market was opened in Gardena, which was the only such outlet in the populous Los Angeles Basin. Some farmers must travel 75 to 200 miles to sell at the Gardena market. Certification regulations were changed in 1979, permitting one grower to sell for up to two certified growers, so that small farmers could consolidate loads and save transportation and labor costs.

## The survey

The Center for Consumer Research at the University of California, Davis, has been working with the Department of Food and Agriculture to learn as much as possible about the farmers' market resurgence for the benefit of consumers, growers, and the communities in which the markets were situated. The present study has focused on finding out what motivates Californians to shop at farmers' markets. In the summer and fall of 1979 we interviewed 587 customers at 17 certified markets — all the markets that were operating, except the Eureka market. We chose 15 to 56 people at each site, interviewing every available customer at the smaller markets and every fifth available customer at the larger markets.

Reasons for Shopping at a Farmers' Market (587 Respondents)

Reason	Number	Percentage
Freshness	368	63
Price savings	315	54
Social atmosphere	68	12
Helps small farmers	51	9
Curiosity	48	8
Improved flavor	30	5
Good location	30	5
Variety of produce	22	4
Availability of organic produce	21	4
Other reasons		< 1% ea

It was felt that a specific look at the California situation would be useful because of the longer growing season and the newness of these community outlets when compared with those in other states. Seasonal farmers' markets have been operating continuously for over a century in states such as Illinois, Wisconsin, and New York.

Before presenting the results, we should mention one source of bias. The interviewers had difficulty talking with non-English speaking customers. With this reservation, we feel the replies adequately reflect consumer attitudes at the 17 markets.

Slightly more than half of those interviewed considered themselves to be regular customers — a heartening development, since some of the markets were less than a year old. The question of why people shopped at the farmers' market was open-ended; respondents could provide several reasons if they wanted. If the answer was vague, the interviewer asked for clarification so that the answer could be classified into a specific category. As shown in the table, the main motive for shopping at the farmers' market is produce freshness, followed closely by price.

The average amount spent on a shopping trip to the farmers' market was estimated to be \$5. Very few customers spent less than \$1 or more than \$10. The markets are clearly not the main shopping outlet.

The highest level of satisfaction was expressed for the freshness of the produce. Ninety-one percent rated it as good, and the remainder satisfactory. Customers were also highly satisfied with price, flavor, social atmosphere, and the appearance of individual fruits and vegetables. There were very few complaints about any aspect of the markets.

A little more than a third of the customers had ever bought produce for home-processing. Almost everything is bought for immediate table use, underscoring the importance of freshness as the customer's primary motive. Only 5 percent of the respondents had tried drying fruits or vegetables. Given the amount of sun in most parts of the state and the developing technology of solar drying, this seems an important area for consumer education.

Most customers live within 2 miles of the site. Proximity notwithstanding, 85 percent of the respondents came by car! The next largest number (11 percent) came by foot, and this was greatest at the urban markets such as San Jose, West Oakland, and Sacramento. Only in Davis did a significant proportion of respondents (25 percent) arrive on a bicycle. The difficulty of carrying \$5 worth of ripe fruit and vege-

tables seemed to be a major reason for driving a car to the market.

Relatively few customers were in their twenties, and 26 percent were 60 years or older. This heavy representation of senior citizens is consistent with observations at farmers' markets elsewhere in the country. Senior citizens were also well represented among the ranks of sellers.

The sample consisted of two-thirds women and one-third men. The ratio reflects some of the traditional sex roles regarding shopping but is somewhat less skewed than that in some other shopping surveys. In a 1978 survey of customers at

zons. About a third of those answering the questions on income estimated their total family income to be less than \$10,000. Many of these were senior citizens for whom price savings were a paramount concern. Many of the elderly customers we interviewed also valued the social atmosphere of the markets as "a great way to start a Saturday."

The concern of these customers with freshness supports the value of the state certification regulations ensuring that the seller is actually the grower. Many of these growers do their picking the day before or early on the morning of market day.

*Customers shop at certified farmers' markets in California mainly because of the fresh produce and price savings. Many also enjoy the social atmosphere and like the idea of helping the small farmer.*

10 Illinois farmers' markets, 87 percent of the sample were women, and at 19 Louisiana markets surveyed 82 percent were women.

As in the Illinois and Louisiana surveys, we found the customers to be somewhat better educated on the average than people in the surrounding community. Some 5 percent had an eighth grade education or less, 25 percent had gone to high school, 19 percent had some technical school or some college, and 43 percent were college graduates.

With regard to occupation, 39 percent identified themselves as white collar, 11 percent blue collar, 6 percent students, 19 percent retired, 16 percent housepersons, and the remainder were in other categories. A quarter of the respondents did not choose to answer the question regarding family income, but of the remainder, 34 percent had total family incomes of less than \$10,000, 36 percent had incomes between \$10,000 and \$19,999, and 30 percent had total family incomes of \$20,000 or more.

### Discussion

We have discussed only one aspect of our research into farmers' markets. Other aspects include price comparisons, flavor trials, and interviews with growers.

The California farmers' market attracts people who live close by, but come by car, and consider themselves to be satisfied regular customers primarily motivated by freshness of produce and price savings. They tend to be well-educated and include a high percentage of retired and senior citi-

It also seems significant that the second most important motive was price savings. Our current research at 15 farmers' markets around the state supports our initial findings (reported in *California Agriculture*, February 1979): Farmers' markets fruits and vegetables are more than a third less expensive than the same items at the supermarket.

In other research we are documenting the reality of the customer's perception about the social atmosphere. By actual counts, we have found more social conversation per visit in a farmers' market than at supermarkets in the same city.

The motive of curiosity was most significant at the newer markets that had received newspaper or television coverage. Most of the new markets in California suffered from an imbalance of demand over supply when they first opened. Opening day at the Modesto market drew only a few growers who sold out within an hour. The same thing happened at the brand new Gardena market. Experienced shoppers come early.

The variety of produce referred to by 4 percent of the respondents does not refer to range of produce, which is much greater in the supermarket, but number of varieties of a single produce item. There may be six types of tomatoes, peaches, or grapes.

Although few customers mentioned the educational benefits of shopping at a farmers' market, we see these as significant in terms of creating an awareness about local growing conditions and bringing city and country people together. Protection of farming land around the cities now depends in large measure on the attitudes

FRI JUNE 20, 1980

## Farmers Market in A.G.?

By John A. Read  
News Editor

ARROYO GRANDE — A recommendation for a Wednesday evening farmer's market offering "high quality, low cost, fresh produce" to South County residents direct from growers will be before the City Council at its Tuesday meeting.

Wednesday night, the city's Parks and Recreation Commission looked favorably on the idea from Rich Sherman, market manager of the San Luis Obispo County Farmers Market which already operates at the Giant Foods parking lot on Highway 227 near the county airport in San Luis

(Continued on Back Page)

## Market

(Continued from Page 1)  
Obispo.

Sherman's request to start a market was considered a good idea by commissioners, but his request to hold it behind the Arroyo Grande City Hall on Branch Street was rejected for a variety of reasons.

Among the objections, Parks and Recreation Director John Keisier said Thursday, were the use of portable restrooms which would be left in the parking lot during the week, and use of the city parking lot by volunteer firemen needing to reach the city's nearby fire station.

The commission recommended Strother Park, near Lopez Drive and Huasna Road, be the site for the 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesdays market. The rest rooms could be used by the public the rest of the week and the attraction of residents to the city's newest developing park would give the park good exposure, commissioners indicated.

## Fri 7-11-80 City Times Farmer's Market in Arroyo

By John A. Read  
News Editor

ARROYO GRANDE — A farmers market proposed for Strother Park will apparently proceed as planned, the City Council indicated Tuesday night.

The council at an earlier meeting received a recommendation for the Wednesday night farmers market from the Parks and Recreation Commission, which suggested Strother Park as a more suitable location than behind Arroyo Grande City Hall at 214 E. Branch St.

But the recommendation was referred to staff for investigation of whether the market would conform to a city policy which councilors thought had been drawn up some time ago to cover such eventualities.

Questioned regarding a public announcement sent to this newspaper by promoters of the market, City Administrator Tom Butch said it had been determined there was no city policy on the matter, as a committee appointed for the purpose never issued conclusions.

Butch said the recommendations of the parks commission had been accepted at the council's earlier meeting, but minutes of the meeting show only that the "report was received."

Despite lack of confirming action by the council, the market will

apparently proceed at Strother Park, as recommended by the parks agency, which thought the market would be good exposure for the park.

Market Manager Rich Sherman has promised to provide portable restrooms for the market which would be left in place the remainder of the week.

In his announcement, Sherman said the opening of the market would be on Wednesday, July 16, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., with the market open every Wednesday thereafter, rain or shine.

"The Arroyo Grande Farmer's Market will bring fresh locally-grown produce direct from grower to consumer with freshness and prices that cannot be compared," Sherman claimed.

He encouraged local back yard growers of produce to become involved simply by showing up at 5 p.m. at which time "all information regarding selling your garden-fresh produce will be given."

Sherman, of Pismo Beach, said the Farmer's Market Association is a non-profit organization established to coordinate locally grown produce.

Also Tuesday, the City Council:

— Gave preliminary approval to an ordinance on the Knollwood development, changing original wording to set in concrete the 233 units recommended by councilors,

remove wording of Larchmont Street from a map and require dedication of nine acres of the property for a city park, with options open on 5.8 acres beyond that.

Councilwoman Smith unsuccessfully attempted to reopen the question of Miller Way's opening for the project, to be located above the South County Regional Center. She was rebuffed with comments that the council could close the street if necessary for safety later.

— Approved opening of Linda Drive to Bennett Street, with addition of signs posting the property against large trucks.

— Doubled Quimby Act fees for recreational purposes from \$100 to \$200. Hogan, expressing dismay, voted for the increase.

— Appointed, with Mrs. Smith dissenting on all planning items, Pearl Cole, William Gerrish and Derril Pilkington to the Planning Commission; Dorace H. Johnson and Jack Dunbar to the Parks and Recreation Commission, and Sonia H. Wagner to the Parking and Traffic Commission.

Pope suggested the Parking and Traffic Commission be increased to seven persons and an ordinance will be prepared for consideration later.

— Approved progress payment of \$16,143 for Tally Ho Road drainage improvements.

# Agriculture

Section 3, page 10

CAL Poly  
Mustang Daily

April 25 & 26, 1980

## Students harvest the green

BY SUE BOYLAN

Daily Staff Writer

"No broccoli today?" asked the woman as she looked over the boxes of produce.

"No," answered agricultural business major Mark Muscato. "That's not my project."

Mark grows and markets mixed vegetables through the crop science department's student enterprise project. Mark, and one of his three partners in the project, soil science major Dave Dyer, sold some of their harvest at the Farmer's Market in the



Poly students Rich Jose and Rick Bernardi peddle their artichokes to an unidentified customer. The artichokes were grown on campus. (Bottom) Glenn Johnson opens up shop in the back of his van.



Mustang Daily—Ray Acevedo

parking lot of Giant Foods Parking lot on Broad Street in San Luis Obispo.

The School of Agriculture has many enterprise projects dealing with livestock, poultry, fruits and vegetables. The crop science projects are open to any student who applies, but priority is given to department students, said Charles Atlee, crop science professor and an enterprise project advisor.

Crop science major, Pete Gumas, was also out on the rainy Saturday morning before Easter to sell the peas he and three other Cal Poly students grew as part of their project.

Students can earn money from the projects, but a percentage of their profits are paid back to the Cal Poly Foundation. No credits are given.

Atlee said this example of Cal Poly's learn by doing motto is "a better learning experience than in the classroom." Students are able to take the classroom information and use it to grow, harvest and market a crop, he said.

Dyer said the program has helped him to start "thinking like a farmer."

Gumas used the opportunity provided by the

project to "see if I was cut-out for it (farming)," and to learn first hand about growing and marketing a crop. Gumas said he found out he doesn't like the manual labor involved in harvesting peas. "It's long and laborious."

This year, Atlee said, the pea growing season was affected by the weather, forcing the students to harvest the crop all at once, instead of being able to plant the seeds periodically to allow for staggered harvesting.

Weather, midterms and finals all effect the amount of time students must, and are able, to spend farming, Atlee said.

The work Gumas and his partners put into their crop paid off. He sold 25 pounds of the peas he brought to the market to one woman.

Atlee said the woman planned to entertain members of her visiting family by having them get together to talk and shell the fresh peas. "She said it would be cheaper than taking them to the movies for the afternoon," Atlee said.

The farmer's market isn't the only place where enterprise project produce is available. Students have

sold produce to grocery stores and restaurants in the county, as well as to the campus store and to Cal Poly food services for use in the cafeterias.

Atlee said the projects "aren't terribly lucrative" but students can earn money. Depending on the market price for the produce, the crop yield and effort put in by the students, the project farmers could earn from five cents to five dollars an hour, he said.

The students grow a very good quality product, according to Atlee. They aren't allowed to advertise Cal Poly produce, so they must rely on word of mouth for business, he said.

The cost of the produce is kept "fairly on par with the market," Atlee said. "We have a gentlemen's agreement with local merchants. They know that we won't try to undercut their price."

Right now, the enterprise project fields are in a quiet period, near the end of the current harvests and not far into the growing cycle of new crops. Atlee said activity will pick up and enterprise project produce will be available on the market again during the summer.

WED. 7-13-80

## AG holds Farmer's Market

Arroyo Grande's Farmer's Market is scheduled to open for the second time tonight from 5 until 8 at Strother Park on Huasna Road.

But people should get there early for the food bargains.

Last week's opening sold out within 1½ hours and was "excellent," said Richard Sherman, market manager for San Luis Obispo County Farmer's Market Association.

About a dozen growers and a couple hundred people showed up, buying out everything in sight, he said. "You can go there with \$2 and feed a family of four," he said.

A cornucopia of fruits and vegetables was sold, and features included worms for organic farming, he said.

Persons interested in selling produce can contact Sherman at the market tonight for the rules and how to get a sales permit from the county Agricultural Commission.

Focus  
LIVE  
MONEY  
DAY

SAT "TRIB" 7-12-80  
County (Calif.) Telegram-Tribune, Saturday, July 12, 1980 Focus—5

GET YER VEGGIES FRESH AND CHEAP — Producers of produce — backyard variety — will have another place to sell their crops starting Wednesday, July 16: that's when the new Arroyo Grande Farmers Market will set up shop at Strother Park.

The park, one mile from the village of Arroyo Grande on Huasna Road, will bear the fruits-and-veggies of their labors from 5 to 8 p.m. each week, "rain or shine year around," according to Market Manager Rick Sherman.

Farmers can be part of the marketplace by bringing their freshly grown goodies to the park by 5 p.m. Information about selling will be furnished at that time.

Honey and eggs from nearby hives and hens will also be available.

The market is part of an effort by the non-profit San Luis Obispo Farmers Market Association to bring local produce directly to county consumers.



"Just keep your marketing smarts to yourself.  
You grow it and I'll push it."

1980



San Luis Obispo

# Farmer's Market 2nd Anniversary Celebration

Time: Sat. Aug. 23 8:00<sup>a.m.</sup> - 12 noon

Location: Young's Giant Foods parking lot  
Where Broad & Hwy 227 meet

Music: Live Blue Grass Music by:  
The Friends of Ned Perkins

Free Drawing: Win a free basket of Locally  
grown fresh produce.  
Register at the Farmer's Market  
any Sat. before Aug 23 - winner  
must be present.

Special Thanks to Mr. Young of Young's  
Giant Foods

San Luis Obispo Farmer's  
Market  
open every Sat 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m.  
Rain or Shine all year



Anemone greets spring.



With a basket ready to hold what she picks, Lucille Deasy checks Dutch iris patch.

## 89-cent seed packet yields huge harvest

There's nothing more rewarding for Lucille Deasy than to convert an 89-cent package of seeds into hundreds of beautiful flowers.

And that's just what the San Luis Obispo woman does many times over on a portion of her Davenport Creek Road property, where she and her husband, Neil, carpet one acre with vegetables and flowers.

"I do it to give pleasure to people and pleasure to myself and hopefully to make a profit," Deasy said of her labors, which in contrast to Neil's vegetable hobby, is a bona-fide — albeit small — business.

"If I could make a profit of \$2,500 a year I would be perfectly satisfied," said Deasy, who sells her cut flowers to florists and the Farmer's Market from late spring through the fall.

Retired four years ago from the big-city life, Mrs. Deasy isn't interested in growing a business "where I just manage people — that's not why I'm doing it."

She's doing it because she loves flowers.

And after two years of nurturing thousands of tiny seeds to healthy, fragrant blooms on their way to appreciative customers, Deasy knows what works and what doesn't.

Here's the way she recommends doing it:

(1) Put sterile soil, such as potting mix, in a bucket and — using your hands — wet it well.

"It's important to have sterile soil because you run into fewer problems," Deasy said. "And you have to be sure you have the soil very moist."

(2) Then fill your flats with the soil and sprinkle the seeds over it.

"Through trial and error, we've found that, generally speaking, it's better to hardly cover the seeds with anything," Deasy said. "Just press them down a little."

(3) Now cover each flat with plastic, after making sure the soil is "very damp, very damp."

"Tuck the plastic around the flat so you

have a mini-greenhouse," said Deasy, "and put it in a sunny place."

(4) In about five days, peek under the plastic cover. If it looks like most of the seeds have germinated, promptly remove the plastic.

"The first week is the most crucial," Deasy said, explaining that most seeds will germinate within that time.

If the cover is not removed as soon as the seedlings burst through the soil, "you have to worry about 'damping off,'" Deasy said. "That's when the roots break off."

(5) During the next month or so, water the flats as needed, fertilizing the seedlings each time you water with a very dilute, water-soluble fertilizer that's got a very high phosphorus content.

"This is the second crucial period," Deasy said. "You simply can't overwater or underwater. And you cannot leave town at that point."

Watch the seedlings carefully, water them as soon as the soil or plants look dry, and use only a "little tiny bit of fertilizer every time you water them from now on," she recommended.

(6) When the seedlings reach a height of about a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, "prick out" or thin out the rows.

While most commercial growers just throw out the thinned ones, Deasy can't bear to waste them.

"I make another whole flat," she said. Ending up with about 60 to 70 plants per flat, "I can get two complete flats out of one package of 89-cent seeds."

(7) Once the plants are about 3 or 4 inches tall or "as soon as you can handle them without hurting them," transplant them into your garden.

"If you're going to grow a lot of flowers," Deasy said, "the important thing is to allow your rows to be spaced widely enough so tools can help you. So you can use your hoes and cultivators."

(8) Weed, water and fertilize your garden regularly.

"I've kept my snaps growing for six months by fertilizing," Deasy said.

# AG's cornucopia of produce

By Judith Walthers von Alten  
Staff Writer

Take your pick:  
Lettuce, tomatoes, sweet corn, squash.  
They're all sold at store price or less at  
Arroyo Grande's Farmer's Market. Wednesday  
was the second market day at  
Strother Park on Huasna Road.  
The market will be held, rain or shine,  
every Wednesday from 5 to 8 p.m., said  
Richard Sherman, market manager for the  
San Luis Obispo County Farmer's Market  
Association.  
Fresh fruits and vegetables are "at the  
store price or 10 and 15 cents below" and at

"twice the quality," Sherman said.

There are oranges, honey, eggs, apricots...

"All they have to do is see we have apricots  
and then they're hounding us all the time,"  
said one seller who asked her name not be  
revealed for fear buyers would start pounding  
at her door.

Walnuts, squash, cucumbers, plants...

"Oh look at these," exclaimed one browser  
who couldn't resist a yellow begonia in the  
crowd of greenery sold by Brad and Linda  
Seek.

The Seekers' plants are grown in a 12-by-20-  
foot greenhouse nearby, so like many of the  
other dozen or so growers, they didn't have to  
travel far to market.

Sherman said produce sellers at the market  
need a permit from the county Agricultural  
Commission that costs \$10 per year, plus must  
turn over 10 percent of their proceeds to the  
Market Association. Those who sell plants  
don't need a county permit, Seek said.

The Wednesday Arroyo Grande market and  
a Saturday San Luis Obispo market that will  
celebrate its two year anniversary in August  
are doing "excellent," Sherman said.

"One of the reasons we started out here (in  
Arroyo Grande) was we had leftovers on  
Saturday, and wanted another outlet," he  
said.

Plums, sunflowers, strawberries,  
rasberries...

"I get tears in my eyes," said Darlene Bernhardt,  
as she recalled how the boxes of ripe  
berries were stacked on top of each other and  
crushed in supermarkets. "I thought, 'How  
could they be so stupid, they're mutilating  
them,'" she said.

"This is a real treat for us," she added,  
plunking down money for Glenn Johnson's  
plump raspberries.

Johnson is from Grover City, and with two  
partners grows berries on sandy Nipomo  
Mesa soil. Johnson said he was "one of the  
originals" at the San Luis Obispo market  
almost two years ago.

His banter keeps bringing the customers  
back.

"Don't just stare, buy something," he told  
passersby who gawk at his apricots or worms  
for organic gardening.

By September, Sherman expects twice as  
many growers to be selling at the weekday  
Arroyo market, which he expects to be as  
popular as San Luis Obispo's.

Then, sweet corn and avocados will be  
ready for market, he added.

Ed Powers, with 3 acres of avocados  
growing only a few blocks away, now only has  
cucumbers to show. He said his wife pickles  
the cukes, making dill, bread and butter and  
sweet pickles.

"How come she doesn't pass out her  
recipes," inquired a shopper who had just  
finished buying 8 pounds of cucumbers at 25  
cents each.

"She'll give them out," Powers assured.

And with all the lemons, beans, onions and  
shallots, the market is very much a com-  
munity affair.



Photos by Ken Chen

Irving Terra of Arroyo Grande, right, watches  
and waits as shoppers pick through his corn.

7/29/80  
Thurs  
DAY AFTER A.G. MARKET



Glenn Johnson of Grover City waits by his all-organic stand featuring squash.



# Farmers Market in Your Community !!!

We wish to announce the opening  
of the Arroyo Grande Farmer's  
Market. **Starts: July 16**

## STROTHER PARK LOCATION POPULAR

# Farmer's Market: Good Food

By Sue Boylan  
Staff Writer

**ARROYO GRANDE** — A pickup truck parks next to a station wagon and the families in both vehicles get out and begin hugging and exclaiming, "Oh, I haven't seen you in so long. How's the family? The youngest has gotten so tall."

It resembles a scene at an airport or a family reunion. But it's not.

Both the families have come to the Arroyo Grande Farmer's Market to buy fresh home grown produce and in addition they renew friendships with former neighbors whom they might not have seen in years.

That scene is repeated often at the Farmer's Market held every Wednesday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Strother Park on Huasna Valley Road, said Rich Sherman, farmer's market manager.

On the first day they brought plants from her husband Brad's greenhouse to sell at the Farmer's Market, Mrs. Linda Seek said, "I saw three people I knew before I even got out of the car."

The social aspect of the market even reflects on the use of the park itself. Sherman said before the market began he would drive out to take a look at the future market site and he said, "I wouldn't see anybody really using the park."

Sherman notes that now, at least while the market is operating, children are out using the

park's jungle gym, slide and other equipment.

The Arroyo Grande Farmer's Market was established as an additional outlet for home gardeners who sell their produce at the San Luis Obispo Farmer's Market, said Sherman.

Most of the home gardeners who participate in the farmer's market sell at both locations, he said.

The farmer's market system serves two needs, he explained. The first is as an outlet for home gardeners who can sell their produce directly without having to subsidize a middle man. And, secondly, the system benefits the consumers because they get a selection of high quality produce at a very competitive price, Sherman commented.

The first farmer's market began in San Luis Obispo at the Giant Foods supermarket parking lot two years ago. Sherman said the project began with the help of a grant from the Economic Opportunity Commission. Four people, including Sherman, helped to set up the first operation, he said.

Sherman is now manager of both farmer's market locations. He said the position started out as that of an unpaid volunteer, but he now receives a small salary. He also works as a manager at a Thrifty store in San Luis Obispo.

"The market," Sherman explains, "is pretty

self-sufficient." To offset the expenses of running the market such as Sherman's salary and advertising, sellers are asked to give 10 percent of their total day's sales to be funneled back into the market.

Sellers must be certified by the County Agriculture Commission before they can offer their produce to the public at the market, Sherman said.

The permits can be obtained at the San Luis Obispo Department of Agriculture at the County Airport for a fee of \$10 per year. The permits are good at both county farmer's markets, Sherman said.

Vendors are allowed to sell their produce without a permit on the first day they come to the market, but they must have it by their next time at the market, Sherman explained.

Shoppers begin coming to the park before the 5 p.m. starting time for the market. Sometimes the market will be sold out by 6:30 p.m., Sherman said.

Glenn Johnson, who said he has been selling since the first days of the

San Luis Obispo market, thinks "The market is getting better all the time."

The farmer's market sales are a sideline to a worm raising business that Johnson, a Grover City resident, operates with partners. The produce grown in the soil that the worms live in sells better than the worms, he joked.

Consumers are pleased with the quality of the produce available at the market, Sherman said. "Some of the older folks tell me, 'I forgot that this is what a vegetable really tastes like,'" he related.

Jim Atchison of Arroyo Grande, browsing through Johnson's vegetables, comments, "This is very good. Very fresh."

A visitor from Las Vegas to this area, Jackie Stein, said she and her husband Henry like the produce "well enough to keep coming back."

The Arroyo Grande market will stay open year round, Sherman said, but the time the market opens will probably change as the sun begins to set earlier in the day.

## FARMER'S CORNER

By Leland H. Ruth  
Executive Vice-President  
Agricultural Council of California



# Old Friends



**HOME GROWN** — Arroyo Grande residents Jim and Gladys Atchison discuss the merits of organically grown produce with farmer's

market vendor and Grover City resident Glenn Johnson.

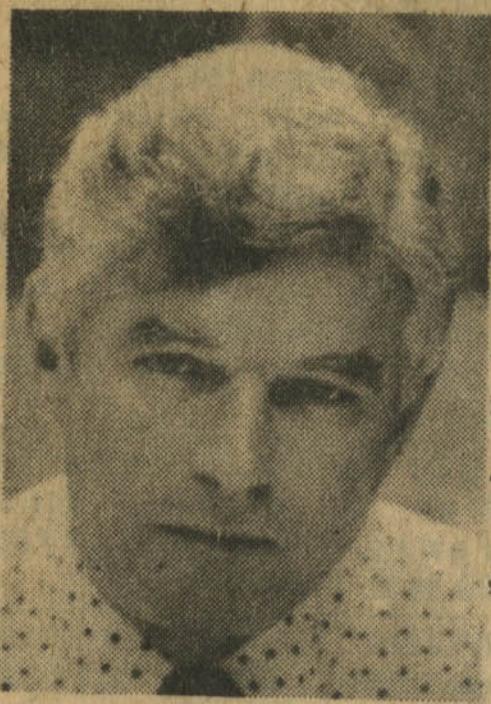
Photo by Sue Boylan



**EN GROCERS** — So many people come to produce at the Farmer's Market at other Park that vendors sometimes sell out

in a little over an hour, according to Rich Sherman, market manager.

# Editor's letter



## Getting fresh at the Farmers' Market

Pat Smith eased the pickup truck, its bed filled with ears of white sweet corn, into the parking lot of Young's Giant Food store on Broad Street south of San Luis Obispo.

It was about 7 a.m. on a recent Saturday. She was one of the early arrivals who'd be selling their produce at the weekly Farmers' Market. The sky was overcast.

At 7:30 a.m. Smith, a teacher at Paulding Intermediate School in Arroyo Grande, had her first customer for the corn which was selling at 12 ears for one dollar.

By 8:15 a.m. the August sun was breaking through the overcast, and all the corn had been sold.

"It's good corn at a good price," said Smith, who with her husband, a teacher at Arroyo Grande High School, raises three crops of corn a year on their six-acre ranch in Corbett Canyon.

Across the way from Smith, Rudy and Kay Compton from the Lucky R-K Ranch south of San Luis Obispo were selling organically-grown New Zealand spinach for 25 cents a sack. The same spinach costs 63 cents a sack in a San Luis Obispo store.

Compton, an engineer who specialized in designing air conditioning systems for executive airplanes in Los Angeles before retiring to run cattle and raise hay and produce, watched as customers started to arrive and observed:

"We get mostly repeaters and some tourists. By 10 a.m. most of the produce has been sold."

His wife, Kay, dipped into the till for one dollar and told us she was heading for another seller to buy some apples.

Smith, the Comptons, John Turner (a retired teacher) and Mrs. Turner (a laboratory technician at the San Luis Medical Clinic), the Lemon Man (Elmer "Buster" Mehlschau)

and others sell their freshly-picked produce to all corners each Saturday morning from 8 a.m. until noon.

Next Saturday the San Luis Obispo Farmers' Market will celebrate its second anniversary.

There will be live Blue Grass music, a basket of fresh produce will be given away, and there are rumors that Sunset Magazine will have staffers on hand to cover the event.

Rick Sherman, a Master of Arts in the fields of counseling and guidance, manages the Farmers' Market.

He told me that the sellers contribute 10 percent of their sales toward the costs of conducting the market. These costs include Sherman's salary, the purchase of portable toilets and the production of flyers to publicize the market.

"We take in about \$3,000 a year as our share," said Sherman, adding that this year produce sales are up about 40 percent and "We have 10 more growers participating than we did last year."

I watched as an elderly couple in red, white and blue jogging suits inspected a load of cabbage, made a selection carefully and then strode toward the Turners and their beets.

Turner deftly wrung the tops off a bunch of beets, completed a transaction and told me he was at the market because he had expanded his garden and found himself with a surplus.

Mindful of my wife's comment that she never has a lemon when she needs one, I went to Mehlschau's pickup and asked for a dozen. The price was 75 cents. Buster handed me a sack of big ones, then reached over, selected another lemon and dropped it in with the others.

"There," he said. "There's one for the cook."

George Brand  
Editor



### 2nd ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Sat., August 23 — 8:00-12 noon



### SAN LUIS OBISPO FARMERS MARKET

- Live Bluegrass Music by: The Friends of Ned Perkins
- FREE DRAWING! Win a free basket of locally grown fresh produce. Come by Sat., Aug. 23 and enter

WINNER MUST BE PRESENT

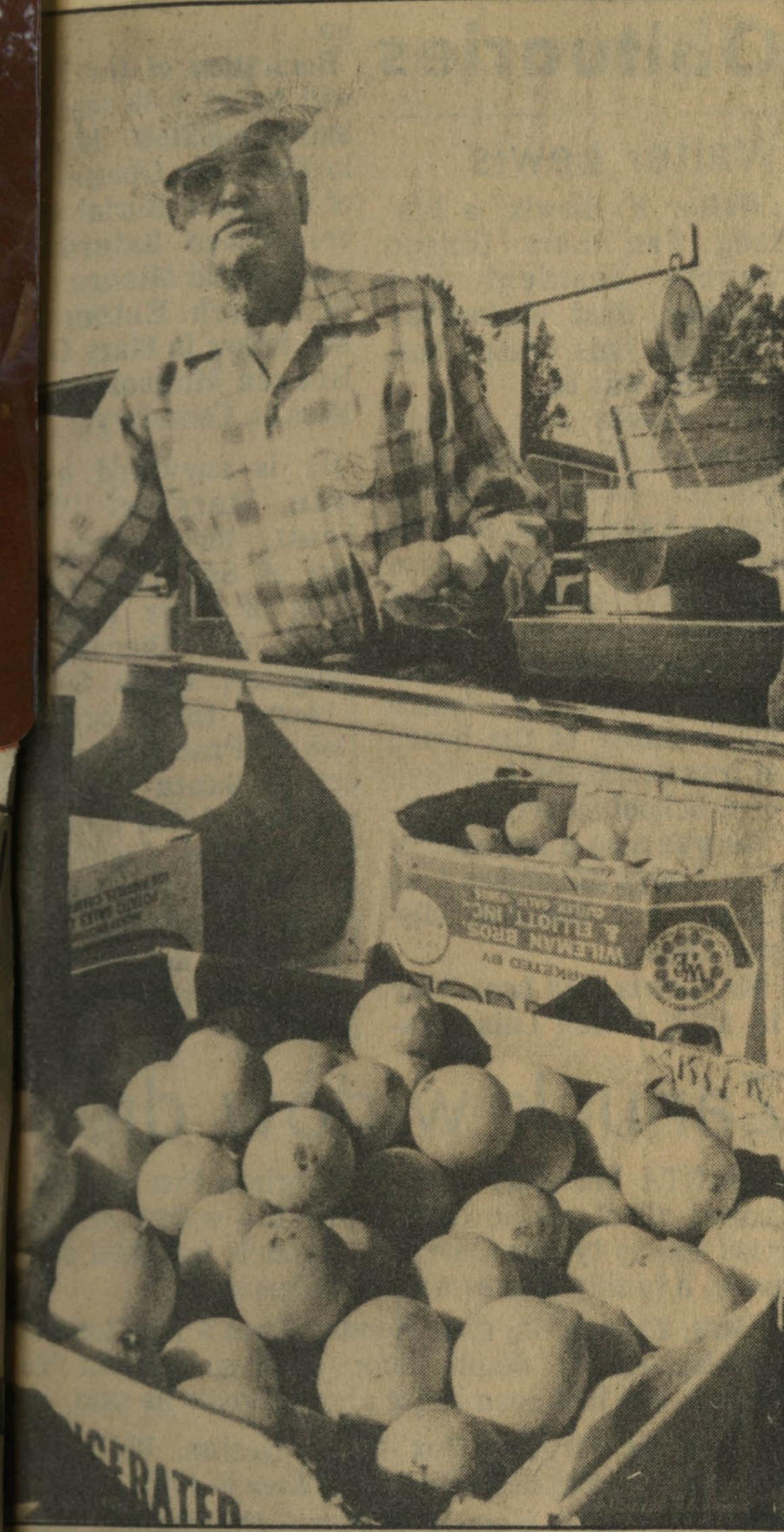
SPECIAL THANKS to Mr. Young of Young's Giant Foods

### AT YOUNG'S GIANT FOOD

Where Broad & Hwy. 227 meet • Rain or Shine



# Agriculture



Buster Mehlschau sells lemons from truck at the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market.



Ernie Righetti with bumper avocado crop.



"Guess what, Ed? You just planted 10 acres of high-protein dog food."



MONEY AND APPLES — Byron Black, 4½, of San Luis Obispo, helps count change from apples be-

ing sold at the Arroyo Grande Farmers Market Wednesday. Photo by Glenn Bolivar

## BUT SAME GOOD FRESH FOOD

# Market Gets New Time

By Jim Malone  
Staff Writer

**ARROYO GRANDE** — A new 4 p.m. starting time for the South County branch of the San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market was well-received by the dozens of discriminating shoppers who snatched up the farm-fresh produce at Strother Park.

Market manager John Turner of rural Arroyo Grande said while serving customers that the new starting time, moved back from 3 p.m., was aimed at attracting after-work shoppers.

Evelyn Fernamburg of Arroyo Grande, a Farmers' Market director, added that daylight savings time made the later start possible.

Turner said two or three produce sellers became upset and left when they were asked not to sell to buyers before 4 o'clock, claiming they were not aware of the later opening time.

But Turner's wife Charlotte said, "Overall, more of the sellers were in favor than not."

The buyers were certainly enthusiastic about the market. Many probably would have shown up if the market had opened at midnight, judging from the positive remarks made to a reporter.

"It's great!" exclaimed Helen Wimbley of Arroyo Grande while looking over some oversized, bright green fava beans. "I come here regularly. The vegetables are marvelously fresh, but I really come for the bread."

The "bread" Mrs. Wimbley referred to was a home-baked, whole-wheat loaf whipped up by Nipomo residents Linda Yuma and Barbara Batson, known collectively as Chicken Little Enterprises. Their bread, cookies and home-ground grains earned the praise of buyers and sellers alike.

Chicken Little Enterprises, like the majority of the sellers present that afternoon, were around for the market's maiden voyage in July 1980.

The Strother Park market is an offshoot of the San Luis Obispo market, held Saturdays in the new Williams Bros. store parking lot on Broad Street, Mrs. Fernamburg said.

That market had its origin in 1978 with a transplanted Pennsylvanian who worked for the county Economic Opportunity Commission, Steven Otto of Grover City.

"He said they had these Farmers' Markets all over the place back east," Mrs. Fernamburg said. Otto sponsored several organizing meetings which were met with great response, she said.

"We had over 100 growers at the first meeting."

Charlotte Turner said the E.O.C. did all the foot-work required to get the project going.

"They got the space for us and helped us get a federal grant, too," she said.

That money, she explained, went for paperwork, permits, insurance and the portable bathrooms mandated by the county health depart-

ment.

The non-profit market now collects 8 percent of gross receipts from sellers to pay for administrative costs. That figure is down from 1980's 10 percent stipend required of sellers.

Vendors also must obtain a certificate from the County Agricultural

department before selling at either the San Luis Obispo or Arroyo Grande market. An annual fee of \$10 for the permits is used to pay for commission monitoring of the produce, and for soil samples from selected growers.

"You can't just pull in here and plop your stuff

down and sell it," Turner said. "It's got to be stuff you grew on your own land, and you've got to have a certificate." He added that eggs, honey and plants need not be certified.

Other market guidelines urge producers to sell "only fresh, good-quality produce ... at a

reasonable savings to the buyer."

There was plenty of fresh greenery and buyers looking for a bargain on a sultry Wednesday afternoon.

Some big sellers were fresh eggs at 75 cents a dozen, green onions for 15 cents a bunch, small, sweet carrots for two bits the bunch, beets, spinach, and Chicken Little's bread.

Lemon grower Elmer "Buster" Mehlschau of Edna is one of the original sellers at both county markets. His lemons were the same price this year as last, he said, because he had plenty of them and he wanted to give the consumer a break.

"I've got enough lemons for all of San Luis County," the 75-year-old life-time farmer grinned.

Mehlschau had nothing but praise for the nearly 1-year-old Arroyo market.

"The nice part of this whole program is all the food is fresh," he said.

"These lemons were all tree ripened. But the most enjoyment for me comes from meeting the public. They all enjoy it. Us growers not only help ourselves, but we help the public with these markets."

Aficionados of fresh-off-the-farm produce are here advised to get to the Farmer's Market right at opening time, because choice items go fast, as egg-seller Diane Boyd of Arroyo Grande can testify.

"It took me about 20 minutes to sell seven dozen today. Usually it takes about three minutes."

The Farmers' Market continues in operation Wednesdays at 4 p.m., at Strother Park on Huasna Drive in Arroyo Grande.

Its organizers will celebrate its first anniversary this summer.



**SWEET CARROTS** — Helen Wimbley of Arroyo Grande selects a bunch of short, sweet carrots from the back of Grover City grower Cristina Mina's pick-up at the Farmer's Market.

Photo by Jim Malone

## Open-air shopping

Central Coast residents are finding more and more variety in produce being offered for sale at the popular Farmers' Market in San Luis Obispo, where the Williams Brothers market chain graciously allows this minor form of competition to be held each Saturday in their front yard.



## Out On a Limb

### The Broad Street Farm

by Betty Branch  
Staff feature writer

There's something about the Farmers' Market that gets folks out of bed on Saturday mornings very early. I wouldn't advise arriving before 7:30, as some of the grower-sellers will still be arriving about that time. But if you arrive as late as 8:00, some of the very special items may already be sold out -- such as brook-fresh watercress, asparagus at 50¢ per pound, or the super-tender curly lettuce (last week I got 3 heads for a quarter.) If you get there as late as 10:00, I have heard, you won't find anything but the large parking lot on Broad St. that formerly fronted Giant Foods, which was recently succeeded by Williams Brothers.

When Giant Foods sold out, fans of the Farmers' Market worried that the new owners might not continue the generous permission to allow competitive produce sales in its front yard each week. Their worries were needless! Williams Brothers also continued the custom of opening their doors to accommodate these very early shoppers. I would like to throw them a bouquet for their community spirit in this regard and assure them that I for one always take advantage of their open doors to make those extra purchases. Only the Farmers' Market could lure me to drive 8 miles to their neighborhood.

What's so great about the Farmer's Market? Week after week I see the same folks there -- people like former County Supervisor, Dick Krejsa; jewelry-maker/designer Vic Petrucci, Toastmistress Emily McGinn, and other busy, successful folks. Surely they don't drive all that way to save a few cents on produce! It's the taste that's important -- like it came from your own backyard.

Old folks are said to lose some of our tasting ability, just as we lose some of our vision and hearing. Unfortunately, my nephew who is in the orange business in Riverside had read that somewhere, when I complained that the wax-sprayed oranges nowadays do not taste like the oranges off trees that we had in my youth, the whippersnapper had the gall to tell me that my deteriorating taste-buds were at fault! Heck, as soon as I tasted the oranges at the Farmers' Market, I knew darned well there was nothing wrong with my taste-buds--or my memory either!

Pennysaving and flavors reminiscent of one's youth are not the only attractions of the Farmers' Market. It's kind of a social event, also. Small growers are proud of their wares and will give you recipes and cooking tips. Thanks to these chatty folks I have broadened my dietary horizons. For years I have been passing up mysterious-looking vegetables in the supermarkets simply because I was not exactly sure what to do with them. (I would never have guessed that Fava beans would go over so well in our household.)

Will you have a backyard surplus to peddle this summer? I asked Jane Wiley what a person should do who wishes to swell the sellers' ranks. Jane comes from Arroyo Grande to sell her marvelous avocados -- and is responsible for introducing our household to sunchoke (incredibly crunchy salads). She is, additionally, an Administrative Assistant in the office of the County Schools Superintendent.

Jane explained that prospective grower-sellers must purchase a permit (\$10) from the Ag department (at the airport) and also give 8% of their gross receipts to the Farmers' Market, which is a non-profit corporation managed by John Turner, also of Arroyo Grande.

People selling homebaked items and fish must square things with the County Health Department. (Yes, there is fish, usually as low as \$1.75 per pound for some varieties of filet and as fresh as I have ever found it anywhere.) For reasons no one seemed able to explain, people selling such items as eggs, honey and plants don't need permits or regulations. The eggs are more expensive than the supermarket kind but one seller told me loftily they are fertilized and that a real egg expert would be glad to pay for that vital difference.

John Turner has been managing the Farmers' Market for the past six months. He's a retired school teacher, but is proud to say that his father was a truck farmer for some 55 years, and he enjoys being a grower now. He manages not only the Edna Road installation, but the Farmers' Market in Arroyo Grande as well. The South County location started about a year ago. Turner recalled that the Broad St. FM began in 1978, founded by EOC, which financed the operation for six months. Ever since then, the Farmers' Market has been self-supporting. We would like to throw a second bouquet -- to EOC -- starting this as well as other self-help projects that make our County a better place to live.

# FARMERS MARKET



3<sup>rd</sup>

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

AUGUST 22<sup>nd</sup>

SATURDAY, 7:30 - 11am

FREE DRAWINGS AT: 8:30 • 9:30 • 10:30

WIN A FREE BASKET OF LOCALLY GROWN FRESH PRODUCE

COME SQUAREDANCE WITH DON BENSON

LOCATED AT WILLIAMS BROTHERS MARKET PARKING LOT

SOUTH BROAD STREET, SAN LUIS OBISPO



Ken Chen/Telegram-Tribune

Square dance caller Don Benson, left, leads Pismo's and Taws through a maneuver.

## The backyard farmers celebrate anniversary

Two hundred bargain hunters and 40 backyard farmers were on hand Saturday to celebrate the third anniversary of the highly successful San Luis Obispo Farmer's Market at the Williams Bros. Market parking lot on South Broad Street.

Originally begun to help senior citizens purchase discounted fresh produce, the Farmer's Market also sells eggs, honey, cut flowers and plants. Savings on all items is between 5 to 40 percent over retail store prices. The market is open

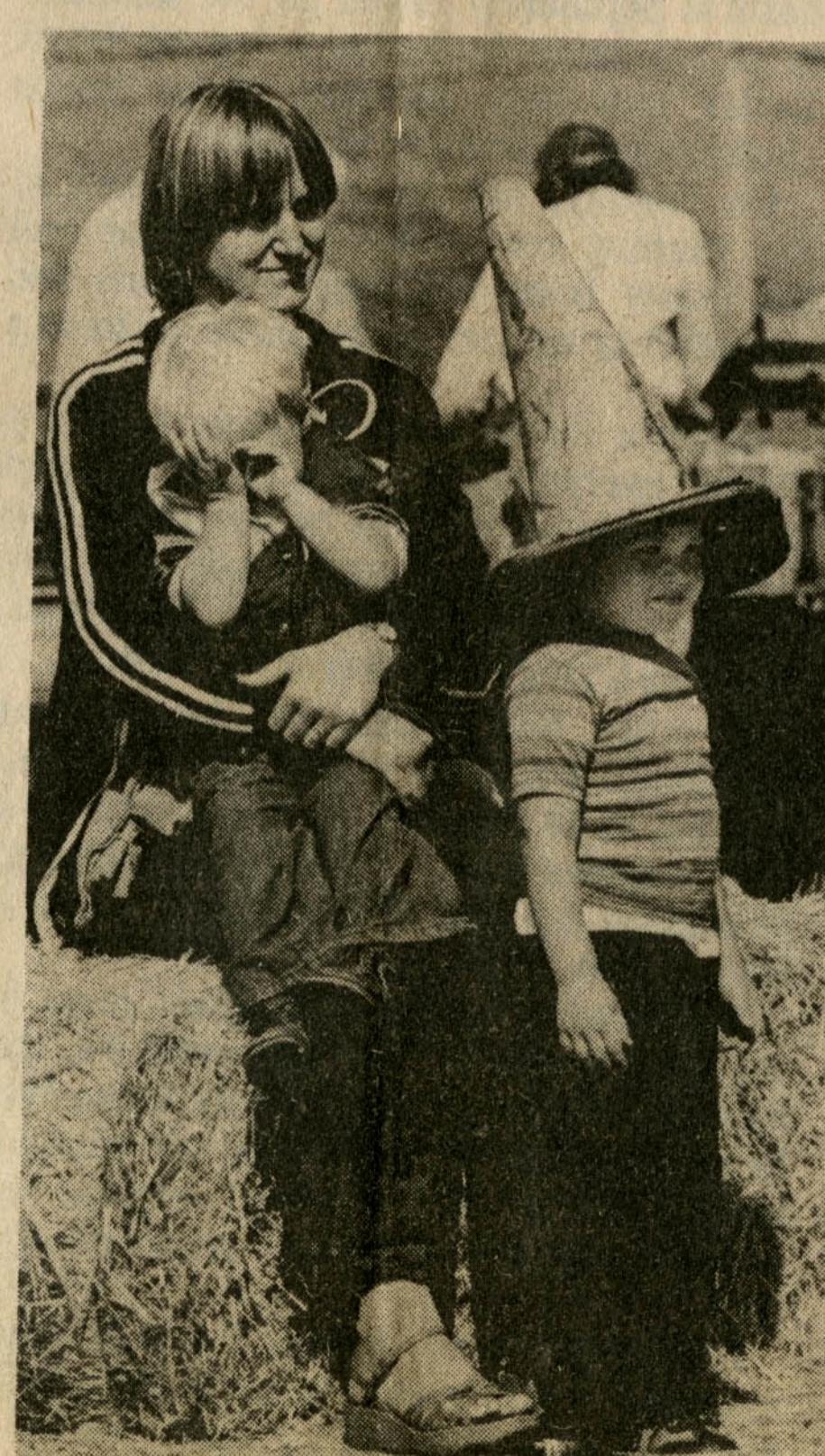
every Saturday — rain or shine — from 7:30 a.m. to sell-out time, said Charlotte Turner, who, along with her husband John, is the group's market manager.

Sellers pay 8 percent commission during the busy season — April to December — to the Farmer's Market advisory group to cover advertising and insurance expenses, Turner explained. From January to March, sellers pay no commission.

A portion of the store's parking lot is loaned without charge to the group by Williams Bros.



Waiting for buyers, Margaret Howell crochets.



Tig Welter, son Kent, and Evan Shearer observe.

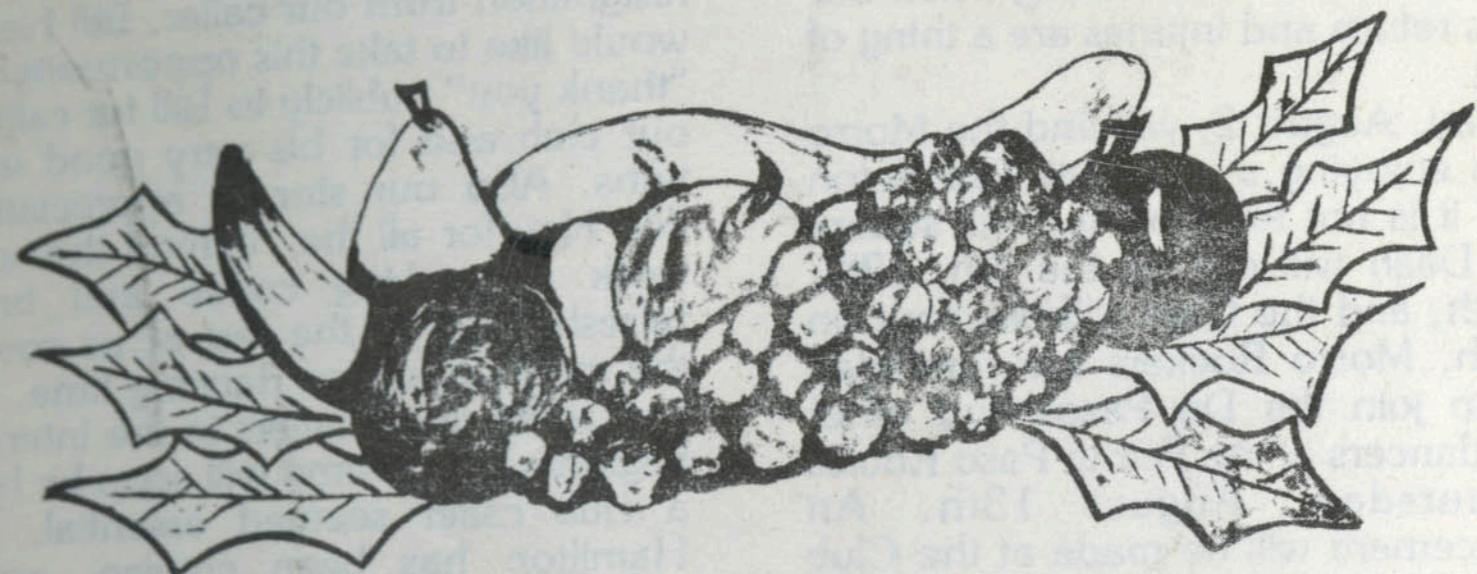


Mario Lombardo has close look at Cal Poly corn.

San Luis Obispo County  
**Telegram-Tribune**

August, 1981

## San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market



### 3rd Anniversary Celebration FREE Square Dance

Caller Don Benson

Saturday Morning 8:00 - 12:00 A.M.  
August 22, 1981



Location  
Williams Bros. Market  
(Edna Road near Airport, S.L.O.)

Free Drawing for Fresh Garden produce.



# Many options in homespun feast

## *Butter to wine, it's local*

By Linnea Waltz  
Staff Writer

Holiday ideas are slipping into everyone's thoughts as the important days draw closer.

What will we do? What will we have? are the two major questions.

As in most family celebrations, the festive dinner when relatives and friends get together is an important answer to the first question.

For "what will we have" — try this for a holiday treat:

Make yours a San Luis Obispo County-grown celebration.

Grains, fruits, nuts, vegetables, milk and dairy products, fish and other seafood, poultry, lamb, beef and pork all are grown and raised within the county.

And dinner menus can be enhanced with a wide variety of wines, all made of grapes from county vineyards, and fermented, aged and bottled in county wineries.

Or, the beverage can be apple cider, freshly squeezed from apples grown in county orchards.

Shoppers assembling a county-grown feast might want to line up Wednesday mornings at the Arroyo Grande Farmers Market or Saturday mornings at the Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo — or visit farmside stands any day.

There are a multitude, also, of Christmas tree farms so that even on the biggest holiday of the year, county residents can celebrate with the customary trimmings all home-grown.

The holiday dinner table could feature roast turkey: a bird, baked to a golden brown, which once roamed with thousands like it around huge pens on North County turkey ranches.

Cornmeal for the cornbread stuffing, flour for hot biscuits, and honey, butter, berry and fruit preserves would come from the grain fields, berry patches and orchards in the county.

Linda Yuma and her partner, Barbara Batson, buy Carrisa Plains rancher Steve Beck's hard red winter wheat and grind it to make flour, which they sell at the farmer's markets or at their shop in Nipomo.

They also bake bread and cookies three times a week to sell along with the regular and cracked wheat flour, rye flour, cornmeal and cereals they grind from county-grown grains.

The menu could include oyster bisque, made from oysters maturing in Morro Bay's harbor, or a seafood cocktail of tiny shrimp caught just off the coast.

A salad of avocados and oranges with a fruit dressing might begin with ripe Haas or Bacon avocados from Ernie Righetti's acreage in the Edna Valley.

Righetti, an avocado grower since 1967, often is found at the Farmer's Market in San Luis Obispo with a truckload of his prime crop, although most of his avocados go through Calavo, a Santa Barbara cooperative.

Oranges from trees in the county can be found at the Saturday morning market, along with many varied, unusual and out-of-season crops which seldom reach supermarkets but which tempt the gourmet cook.

Some ranchers who grow citrus fruits, such as the Middletons in Edna Valley, prefer to sell them from their farmside stands.

Flowers for holiday arrangements are available from several growers who bring their blossoms to the Wednesday and Saturday open markets. For instance: Lillie Mae Viettome grows long-stemmed carnations in her greenhouses near the San Luis Obispo airport, and Anne Mina of Grover City sells mums of every color from her gardens.

Vegetables grown in the county for that holiday feast are a taster's choice — broccoli from South County farms, snow peas from coastal fields, mushrooms from Atascadero, celery, carrots, green beans, squash, onions, beets, potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce...the list is endless.

Traditional desserts are a sure thing to complete the dinner, since pumpkins for pumpkin pie, apples and meat for mince pie, and carrots for carrot pudding all are county products.

San Luis Obispo County cooks need only to look around the neighborhood to put a holiday meal on their tables.



Linda Yuma sells flour at San Luis Obispo Farmer's Market.



Christine Mina sells flowers from Grover City.

## PRICE CANYON LUCKY R-K RANCH

# Organic Farm Shuns

## Man-Made Fertilizers

By Mary McAlister  
Staff Writer

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Mother nature takes better care of her children than man-made fertilizers do, according to Kay Compton of Lucky R-K ranch.

Mrs. Compton and her husband, Rudy, run their 10-acre Price Canyon ranch as an organic farm, offering fresh and natural produce and eggs to local residents.

Mrs. Compton decided to not use the chemicals and artificial stimulants on her vegetables and in her animals, and has found it has paid off both financially and nutritionally.

"It's easier and cheaper and it does work," she said.

Mrs. Compton said she fertilizes the crops with steer and chicken manure and often compost weeds to add to the soil as well.

She believes her vegetables are tastier and fresher as a result. She has found her garden vegetables take less time to cook and retain more flavor without the chemical pesticides.

A native of England, Mrs. Compton said she tried to choose crops that were popular in her home country and were unusual to this area.

"We like to grow things a little bit different," she said, "it gives us an edge on the competition."

She said she chooses crops for their flavor and adaptability to the area. A popular item is her asparagus, which grows larger than store-bought varieties.

Red currants, gooseberries and scarlet runner beans were favorites of Mrs. Compton when she was growing up in England. She now grows these items in her garden.

She said older customers often tell her they have not seen these items since the buyers were young, and younger customers soon learn about their flavor and various uses.

The Comptons also grow kale, green onions, squash, and a variety of berries.

An unusual item is Tahitian squash that tastes like bananas and sweet potatoes and are cooked like sweet potatoes.

Besides the various fruit and vegetable crops, the Comptons also offer organic honey from hives at their ranch and sell fertile eggs.

Mrs. Compton explained that her hens lay eggs that have been fertilized by roosters, and these eggs have a darker yolk and taste better than typical eggs found in the supermarket.

The chickens are raised on the ground and eat organic food, with no hormonal stimulants, she

added.

Her steers are raised the same way, she noted, eating oat hay grown on the land in the winter and grazing on grass in the spring and summer.

Organic farming has become a lifestyle for the Comptons, who use solar heating for water heat and are developing windmill power to pump their water for irrigation.

"We are trying to become self-sufficient," Mrs. Compton said.

"It is sort of a philosophy, not just a method of growing," she said. "We try to put back into the soil. I don't like to see the soil ravaged and depleted."

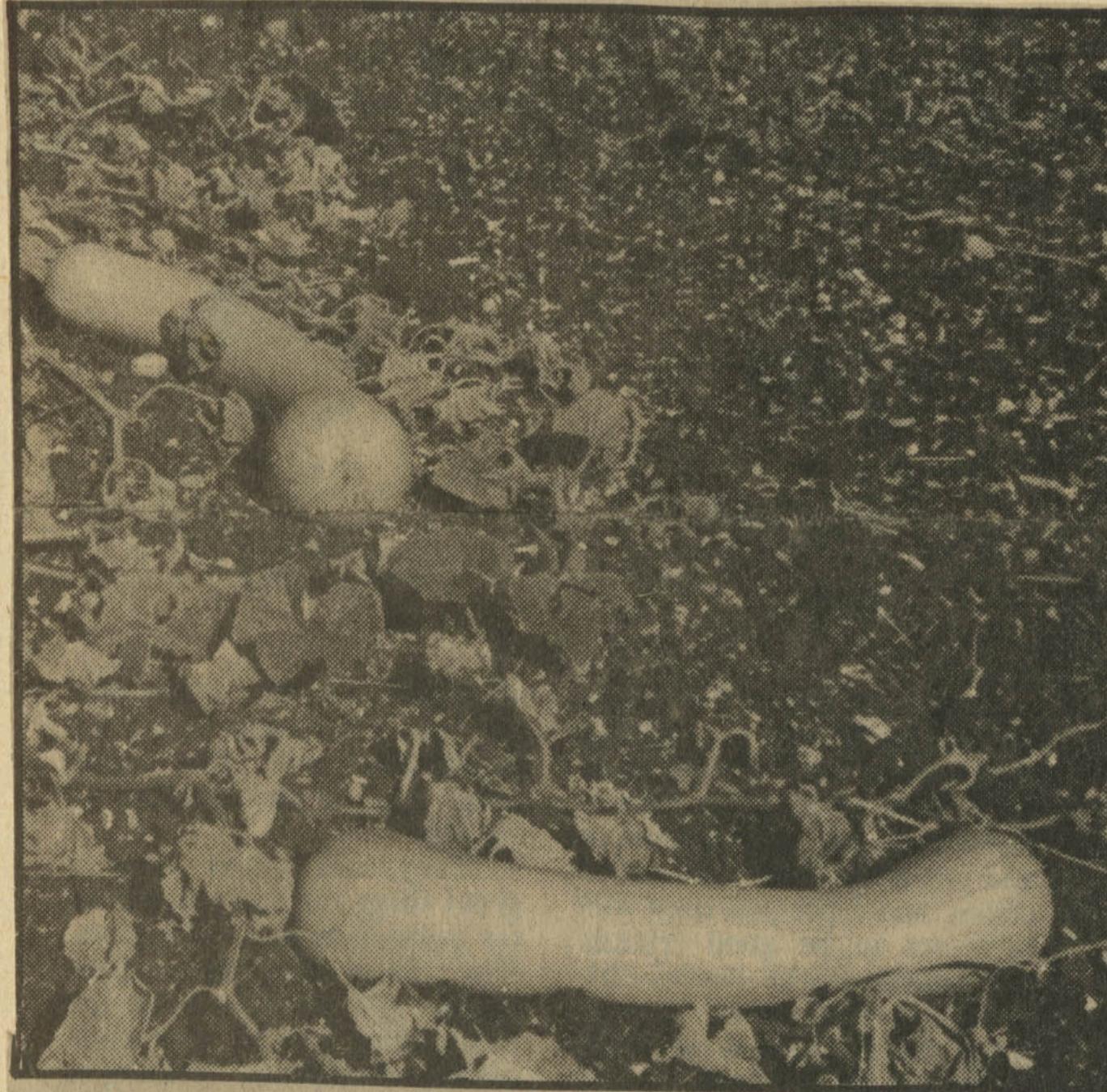
She said she believes there is a growing awareness apparent in many farmers and homeowners, and she hopes this awareness will lead to more experiments with organic farming.

"If more people can do this themselves they will be better off," she said.

Mrs. Compton offers her products at the Farmer's Market on South Board in San Luis Obispo, and also receives orders for products directly from the farm.



**WIND POWER** — Natural energy is being put to work on the Lucky R-K Ranch. This windmill was constructed by Rudy Compton to run the irrigation pumps in hopes of becoming totally self-sufficient in the near future. The ranch's symbol is painted on the fin of the windmill.



**BANANA-POTATO?** — These are Tahitian squash, a unique vegetable that tastes something like a banana and a sweet potato. They are grown by Rudy Compton of Lucky R-K Ranch on Price Canyon Road.

Photos by Mary McAlister

# Agriculture



Linda Yuma kneads county-grown loaves.



Barbara Batson grinds cornmeal.

## Bread made of county grain

By Linnea Waltz  
Staff Writer

Grains grown in San Luis Obispo County are sifting their way into county kitchens as flour ground from the wheat, corn and rye kernels becomes more plentiful.

Helping to make the county-grown flour, cereals and cornmeal popular through a project they started about a year and a half ago are two students in the Cal Poly School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Linda Yuma and her Chicken Little Enterprises partner, Barbara Batson, sell at the Farmer's Markets in Arroyo Grande and San Luis Obispo the flour, meal and cereals they grind. They also sell the breads and cookies they bake with the flour.

"We buy our wheat from Steve Beck on the Carrisa Plains," said Yuma. "He grows the hard red winter variety which makes wonderful bread. The loaves rise real nice."

"We always can find a grower who will sell us several hundred pounds of grain. We use about 300 pounds a week."

Yuma said she and Batson try out a grain before putting it into use.

"We find out the protein content, how it's cleaned and processed, and various other factors before we'll make flour out of it,"

she said.

Yuma is studying agriculture business at Cal Poly, and Batson is a poultry major.

They are neighbors in Nipomo. Both served in 4-H Club before they teamed up for their first project, raising chickens and selling them at the swap meet.

"Feed got to be so expensive we had to find something to supplement our income to buy the feed to feed the chickens we were raising," Yuma said. "We decided to bake bread and sell it at the Farmer's Markets.

"I had been baking bread and selling it to my neighbors, and the idea seemed to take. Now the bread and flour business is doing so well, we've decided to go out of the chicken business."

They bought an electric bread mixer, remodeled a garage into a bakery — doing all of the construction work themselves — obtained a county health permit and added two grain grinders to their equipment.

"The Magic Mill micronizer is used to grind grain for fine flour," Yuma said. "With the stone grinder, which we have alongside of the Magic Mill, we grind cracked wheat flour, cornmeal and cereals."

The two women, who supply the Farmer's Markets and other outlets with their prod-

ucts, bake three times a week, Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

"Barbara handles a lot of the business end of our partnership, and I do a lot of promotional work and take the bread and cookies to the Farmer's Markets," Yuma said.

She said breadmaking was part of the "do-it-yourself kind of thing I got into when I moved to Nipomo" when she said she learned to bake bread and grow her own vegetables.

The partners use only county grains when possible. However, for their rice flour and cereals, they buy the rice in Idaho, since none is grown in San Luis Obispo County.

Currently they use enough of the flour they grind from the weekly 300 pounds of grain to bake about 250 loaves of bread and several dozen sunflower seed and chocolate chip cookies. The rest of the flour is packaged and sold.

"We deliver our products Mondays and Thursdays to Muzio's in San Luis Obispo, Price Street Market in Pismo Beach, and Thomas Produce in Nipomo," said Yuma. "Wednesdays and Saturdays we're at the Farmer's Markets. The rest of the time we're studying or taking care of our families."

March 3, 1982

## \$100 Million Industry

# Direct Marketing of Ag Products Is Big Business

The direct marketing of agricultural products by farmers to consumers is estimated to be a \$100 million per year industry in California, and many of those involved in the business gathered last week at the El Rancho Ramada Inn in Sacramento.

The occasion was the 5th annual California Conference on Direct Marketing sponsored by the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Direct Marketing Program. Those attending took part in workshops on a variety of subjects, including the mechanics of marketing, creative marketing strategies, management, promotion, market research and internal and external relations for direct marketing organizations.

Introductory speeches were given by Henry Voss, president of the California Farm Bureau Federation, Marc Faye, CDFA deputy director, and Les Portello, manager of CDFA's Direct Marketing Program.

Voss told the group that he had his first experience with direct marketing as a farmer in Santa Clara County in the 1960s, prior to moving to Ceres where he currently farms. He noted that his experiences have made him look upon direct marketing as an opportunity for growers, particularly those with small operations, to receive greater profits than they would otherwise achieve.

"Direct marketing is very well accepted in Farm Bureau today," Voss emphasized. "I see our organization as believing that government should act as a catalyst for the program and then allow growers to develop the business as they see fit—the business of delivering quality produce to the consumer.

"This is important because it provides an economic benefit for the grower, but even more importantly because of the public relations between agriculture and the general public," he stated.

Faye told the group that like Voss, he has also had direct involvement in direct marketing both in Davis and Woodland.

"One of the most fascinating things I found was that people really want some assurance that their food is grown by somebody. The people want to talk to the farmer who was involved in the production of the food," he said. "If I went there myself, I could have a pretty good time talking with people and return home at the end of the day with a little extra cash in my pocket."

Portello noted that the theme that has characterized the success of the direct marketing program over the years can be summarized in a single word—cooperation. "All of our progress was made possible because of the cooperation among people who are involved."

Portello said that CDFA "intends to promote the idea of direct market-

ing, but we don't intend to the business of direct market. We intend to listen, to look for opportunities, to plan and to help in what we can."

"We've got some major milestones behind us and some interesting challenges ahead," he said.

Portello referred to some of the accomplishments achieved in the marketing program in 1981, including the growth in the numbers of consumers and consumers participating in direct marketing. The 59 certified farmers markets enjoy an estimated attendance of more than 100,000 consumers and 2,000 farmers, he said.

The CDFA official pointed out that at the present time there are about 100 farm trail organizations and more than 1,000 producers who sell their farms listed in the "Farm Consumer Directory."

During 1981, the Direct Marketing Program distributed information on direct marketing selling locations to more than 100,000 consumer households. Another 50,000 households were introduced to direct marketing by way of a brochure describing the direct marketing program and publications.

"Working with the California State Fair's 'Return to Agriculture' booth, we organized and managed a demonstration farmers' market at the 1981 State Fair (in Sacramento)," he said. "Farmers from all over the state participated and sold a variety of produce to fairgoers. Fairgoers were able to meet people who produce the food they eat and to purchase produce directly from farmers."

# *Outdoor fresh produce farmers' market*

## *envisioned for MB*

By Patrick O'Sullivan

Fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables from small farms and backyard gardens could soon be available to Morro Bay residents if a proposal for a farmer's market gains city approval.

A group of produce farmers in San Luis Obispo, which have been operating a farmer's market there for close to four years, has talked with city officials about the idea and have their proposal on the Planning Commission's April 5 meeting agenda.

"People from Morro Bay and the South Bay would come up to us (at

Compton. The whole thing is finished in two or three hours.

Sellers would need a \$10 permit from the county Agriculture Department, have to meet certain quality standards, and follow rules such as not having the produce on the ground, she added.

"It's the direct marketing concept," Compton emphasized. "The main concern is that it is the growers who are offering the produce—not a middleman."

In San Luis Obispo, the market goes year around, rain or shine, and usually has at least six sellers in the worst weather and has had as many as 50 sellers when the market celebrated an anniversary.

produce from her 10-acre farm near the San Luis Obispo airport. "It's a fun social activity and it provides produce which would otherwise go to waste."

Some of the sellers have small gardens in their back yard and everything is ready at once, so they bring in the extra and sell it at "giveaway" prices, she said.

Buyers often find vegetables and fruit not available in the supermarkets because they are varieties which don't hold up to the shipping and handling requirements of stores, she added.

The supermarket where the weekly market would take place

the San Luis Obispo market) and tell us, 'We sure could use something like this in Morro Bay,' said Kay Compton, a grower and a member of the farmers' market board of directors. "I've had calls from seniors and others in Morro Bay in support—it is hard to find someone who is against the idea."

The growers proposal would set up the market on one morning of the week in the parking lot of Young's Giant Food in North Morro Bay. Local small growers and back yard gardeners would be invited to bring their produce and some of the larger growers from other farms in the county might also set up shop, said

Compton said there are no booths and the sellers simply open the tailgates of their truck or display the goods on tables.

The proposal has run up against a problem in Morro Bay because the site is zoned neighborhood commercial, which doesn't allow for outdoor markets. However, city staff is preparing wording changes for the ordinance to allow the market.

A similar problem in San Luis Obispo was resolved when the county amended its zoning ordinances to allow the Saturday morning market in the parking lot of a supermarket on Broad Street, Compton said.

"This is a real community thing," said Compton, who deals in organic

benefits from the exposure to customers, she added.

Phil Young, owner of Young's Giant Foods on Main Street, in north Morro Bay, invited the group to use his parking lot as they did when he owned the supermarket on Broad Street when the farmers' market got started. Young said he offered his parking lot, contingent on city approvals, as a community service.

Compton points out there are some hurdles such as the zoning changes needed and the requirement for sanitation facilities, but she is optimistic because Mayor Warren Dorn is in favor of the idea, as are a number of planning commissioners, she said.

# Farmer's market for MB gets first OK

A zoning change that would allow a farmer's market concession in Morro Bay was approved by the city's Planning Commission Monday night.

The concession would sell fresh, low cost, locally-grown produce direct to the public.

The commission had to amend the city's zoning code because retail sales in north Morro Bay, where the outdoor market would be located, must be con-

ducted inside buildings.

The City Council will vote next April 12 whether to accept the commission's amended zoning. Following their approval, there must be two public hearings and a 30-day waiting period before anyone can apply for the necessary use permit, said city Planning Director Murrel Crump.

The sellers, which include small grow-

ers and backyard gardeners, will sell their goods one morning a week for about three hours at Young's Giant Food store in north Morro Bay near Highway 1.

Sellers first must get a \$10 permit from the county Agriculture Department, meet quality standards and keep their produce at least three feet off the ground.

The sellers are exempt from state sizing requirements, standard packaging, container and most labeling requirements.

San Luis Obispo County already has two other farmers markets, including one at the Williams Bros. Market on Broad Street in San Luis Obispo and at Strothers Market in Arroyo Grande.

The markets operate rain or shine and no selling booths are allowed. Sellers use tables or sell from the back of their trucks.

Consumers save money and sellers make more profit because there is no middle man.

The farmers market is operated on a non-profit basis. The county Board of Supervisors assesses the growers 5 percent of their gross sales at each market to cover administrative, advertising and management costs.

The San Luis Obispo County Farmer's Markets are governed by seven directors who are elected by the market members.

San Luis Obispo County (Calif.) Telegram-Tribune, Tuesday, May 18, 1982

A-3

# MB produce mart OK'd

Fresh, inexpensive produce may be sold one afternoon a week in an outdoor, direct-to-the-public sale, the Morro Bay Planning Commission voted Monday night.

Following the City Council's lead one month ago, the commission approved the Farmers' Market to be held weekly on Young's Giant Food parking lot in north Morro Bay.

Sellers will be able to get city use permits beginning May 27.

The city had to amend a zoning ordi-

nance for the area because all retail sales there must be conducted indoors.

The concession will sell locally-grown, fruits, vegetables and flowers about three hours, one day a week.

The concession will be like those in San Luis Obispo and Arroyo Grande.

Sellers first must get a \$10 permit from the county Agriculture Department.

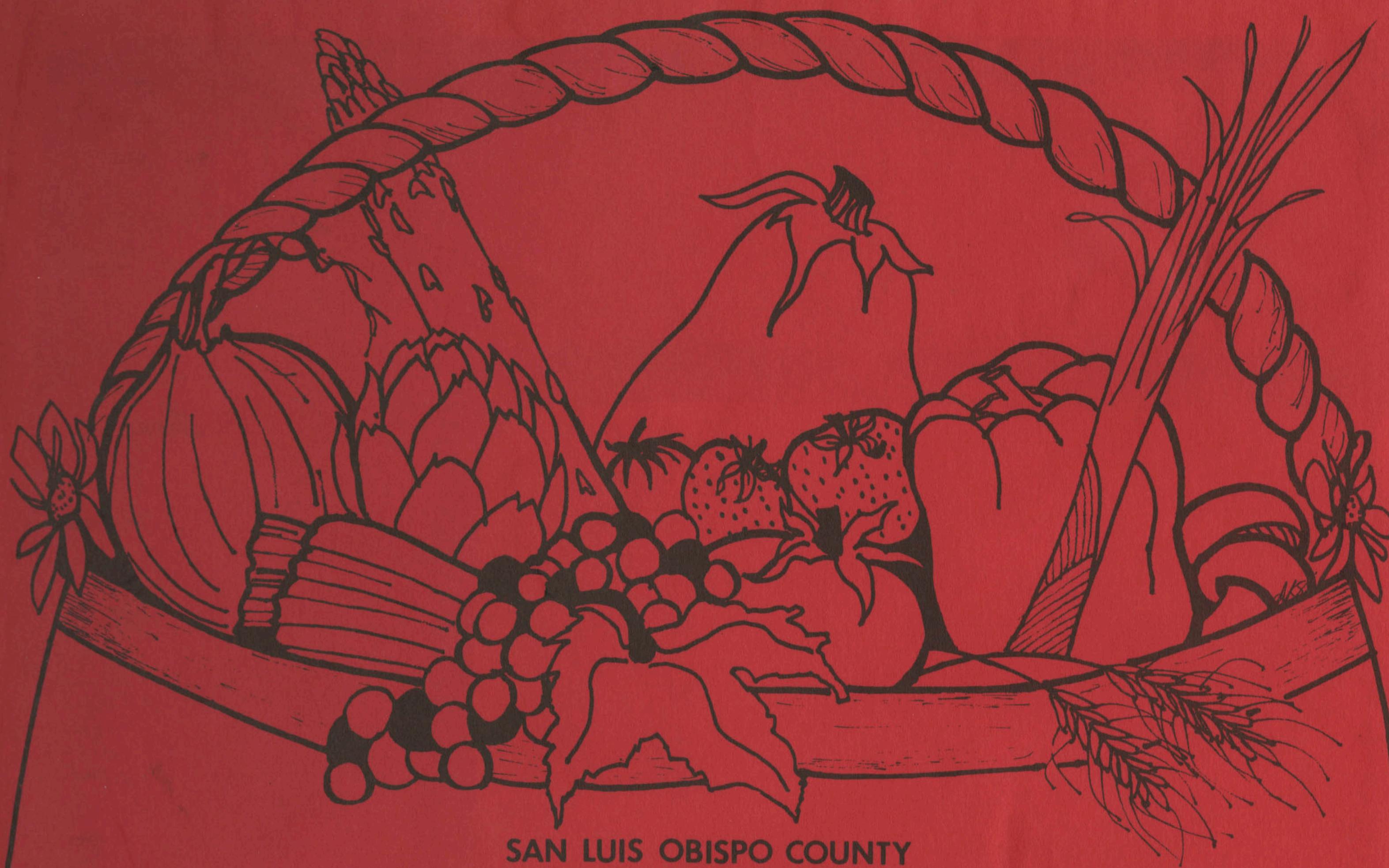
They must also meet quality standards set by the Farmer's Market advisory group, and keep their produce at least three feet off the ground.

The sellers, which will include small

farmers and backyard growers, are exempt from state sizing requirements, standard packaging, container and most labeling requirements.

Consumers save between 5 and 40 percent over retail store prices and sellers make more profit because there is no middle man.

Sellers pay a small commission percentage during the busy season — April to December — to the Farmers' Market advisory group to cover advertising and insurance expenses. From January to March, sellers pay no commission.



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

# FARMERS MARKET

## GRAND OPENING!

—NEW—  
**MORRO BAY MARKET**

at Young's Giant Food Pkg. Lot

**JUNE 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**3pm - sold out**

**WIN A BASKET OF FRESH PRODUCE**

(must be present to win)

M.B. MKT  
Thur. afternoon  
Young's Giant Food

A.G. MKT  
Wed. afternoon  
Strother Park

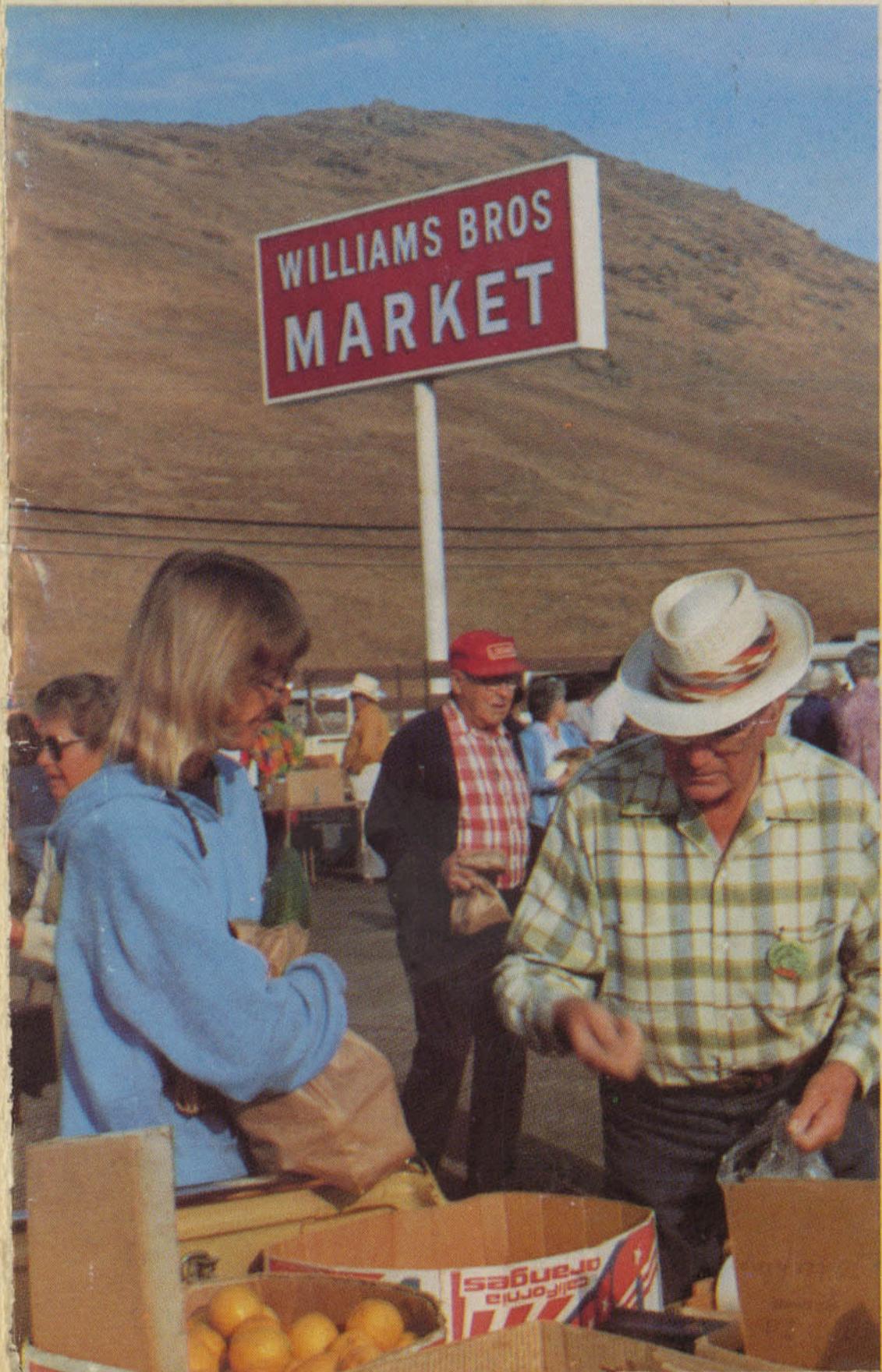
SLO MKT  
Sat. AM  
Wms. Bros.

VOLUME II  
NUMBER THREE  
SUMMER 1982



# the AGRARIAN

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for Farm Families and Allied Business Members.*



## The rise of the farmers' market

A simple and ancient concept nearly plowed under by the rise of the supermarket, farmers' markets — where farmers sell their goods directly to the consumer — are experiencing a resurgence nationwide.

By Clara Germani  
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor  
Pasadena, Calif.

Backing their well-worn, dust-covered trucks into a circle at a local park, bands of agricultural gypsies unfurl bright canopies, flip open their tailgates, stack their colorful produce before a gathering crowd, and transform the weekday calm into a festival.

If it's Tuesday, this must be Pasadena.

Wednesday? Santa Monica.

Friday? Long Beach.

A simple and ancient concept nearly plowed under by the rise of the supermarket, farmers' markets — the real ones, where farmers sell their goods directly to the consumer — are experiencing a resurgence nationwide, injecting fun and community spirit into a basic lesson on free enterprise.

The California direct-marketing program, which allows only state-certified farmers or their employees to sell produce at the local farmers' markets, was designed to rescue the struggling small farmer. But more than just a successful marketing technique, the program has ballooned into a social force too — bringing troubled urban neighborhoods closer together, changing consumers' eating and buying habits, creating jobs, and sparking a farmer-shopper dialogue that has extended growing seasons and reduced the use of chemicals.

Prices are the most noticeable draw at the markets. Farmers coming from counties up to 400 miles away to do the circuit of weekly markets in southern California offer prices roughly 30 percent lower than supermarkets, explains Vance Corum of the state's Department of Food and Agriculture, which has helped boost the number of markets to 40 from only one just 10 years ago.

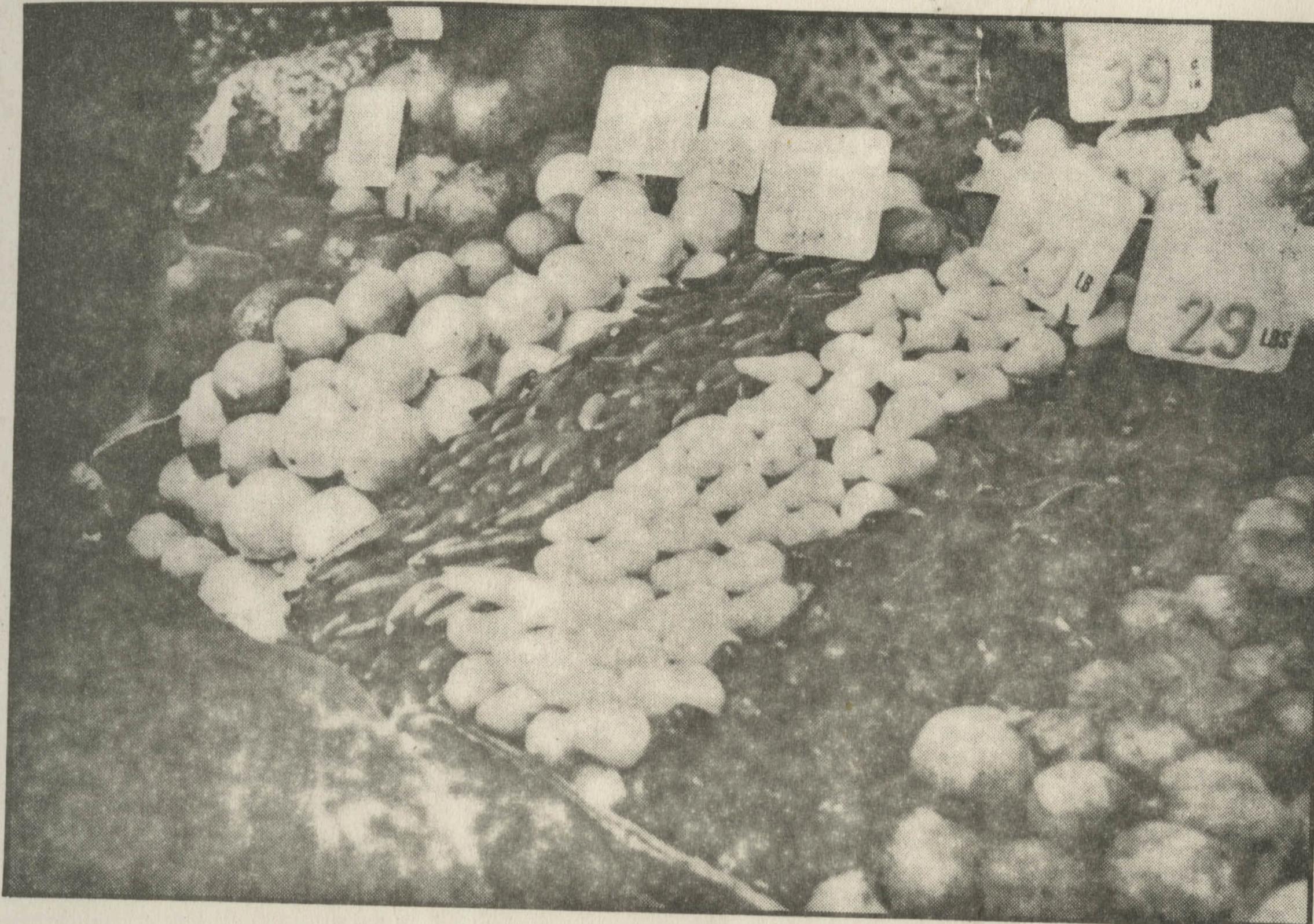
"If I send [my cabbage] to the [commercial] market, we're at the mercy of the middleman," explains Masato Takahashi, who farms 14 acres with his wife, Margaret, in San Fernando and sells exclusively at farmers' markets. The couple sit on the tailgate of a pickup spilling over with huge, solid heads of cabbage. "If I make \$200 here, it would be [equivalent to] \$100 for wholesale," he says.

**Lower prices and higher profits attract shoppers and farmers alike. But a stroll through any of the markets reveals a mid-week circus of activity that can only be described as fun.**

Between conversations with some of his regular customers at the Pasadena market, Mr. Takahashi explains that he can sell his cabbages to consumers for 70 percent under supermarket prices, while keeping 100 percent more profits. By eliminating the middleman, he says, he can sell four-pound cabbages for 50 cents apiece, instead of 39 cents a pound at a grocery store.

Mr. Corum explains that the prices are cheaper because farmers who market their produce can bypass the packing, sorting, and grading requirements of commercial markets, as well as the costly borrowing they must do to finance their operations during the lag time between sale and payment in wholesale deals. While wholesalers usually name the price a farmer will get for his produce, the farmers at the local markets set their prices below supermarket prices while maintaining competitive prices among themselves.

Lower prices and higher profits attract shoppers and farmers alike. But a stroll through any of the markets reveals a mid-



Photos by Richard L. Allman

week circus of activity that can only be described as fun.

The Pasadena market, for example, sets up weekly at Villa-Parke in the heart of a struggling integrated neighborhood. Betty Hamilton, executive secretary of the Villa-Parke Neighborhood Improvement Association, says the program has been "so popular everyone claims they did it." She adds that even the local "homeboys" (gang members), whose territorial claims are scrawled in graffiti on nearby walls, have allowed the two-year-old market to exist trouble-free.

The European-style market has also pulled the community together in Santa Monica, where the city subsidizes the market. Market manager Sue Mullin, who collects a fee of 4 percent of the farmers' daily take to help maintain the market and the Southland Farmers' Association, says the mayor backed the program to bring more business to the downtown business area. The Wednesday markets have pulled in so much business — \$12,000 on a good day — that she says, "I'm afraid to do too much advertising because there might be lines."

The influx of shoppers — up to 2,000 at times in Pasadena — brings businessmen from downtown; housewives with smiling, berry-stained babies in tow from all neighborhoods; and senior citizens, who rest their bulging shopping bags on the ground to chat with neighbors. The farmers are a mix of backyard gardeners, family farmers, and farmers with million-dollar operations who enjoy socializing in the sun every week.

"I just come out to meet people," says Ken Harris, a southern California beekeeper, who sells enough honey commercially that he doesn't have to sell at the Pasadena market.

"It's just the highlight of the week to go by and say 'hello,'" says John D'Meyer, a Northridge resident who drives 20 miles to the Pasadena market. A regular at the Pacoima farmers' market, he describes the goodwill between farmers and their customers: "You could just squeeze them [the farmers] instead of the fruit."

His daughter, Joan, says that more important than prices is "being able to talk to the people who've grown the produce. If there's any question about pesticides, they'll even invite you to their farms. And if you don't know



Prices are a noticeable draw at farmers' markets such as the Grand Central Market in Los Angeles (above)

### Note:

There are 67 certified farmers' markets in California in 1982.

The photographer was not sent to one of the 67, unfortunately, but to Grand Central.

Otherwise, the story was great publicity... and it led to coverage on NBC's *Today* show.

Vance

Bypassing the middleman, farmers realize a much better profit on their produce

about a certain vegetable, like Kohlrabi... if you saw that in [a supermarket] you wouldn't know if you should peel it, or what. You can find out how to prepare it from the farmer."

This dialogue has become the farmer's direct line to the demands of the marketplace, explains Mr. Corum.

"We used to have a six-month berry season, but because of the [demand from] farmers' markets we go 10 months now," says Jim Tamai, an Oxnard farmer whose whole family helps with the picking, packing, and selling. Also, because of the demand for organic produce, he claims he has dropped 75 percent of the sprays he once used, thus eliminating annual chemical costs of \$15,000 to \$20,000.

The availability of the fresh produce has also changed consumers' habits. For example, says Betty Hamilton, her family has quit eating desserts. The Hamiltons now are satisfied with fruit for dessert. She says fruit from

the farmers' market is much sweeter than that sold in supermarkets because it is always fresh — usually picked less than 24 hours before being marketed — and not subject to preservation methods used in large commercial marketing operations.

Also, adds Miss D'Meyer, "I don't overbuy any more because I'm not worrying if this [the cheap price] is a one-time deal. I know I can get this big head of lettuce every week instead of a dinky head of lettuce that's rust-eaten in the grocery."

And the markets create jobs. In Santa Monica, Ms. Mullin says, farmers pay members of local boys' clubs \$3.50 an hour to help set up the stands and sell produce. Senior citizens volunteer to sell shopping bags and maps. And a local fisherman comes up from a nearby pier to help close off the street and direct the 30 to 40 farmers as they drive in to set up their stands.

Thursday, August 12, 1982

# New Farmers Market grows

By Patrick O'Sullivan

Growing as fast as Jack's famous beanstalk, the Morro Bay Farmers Market has become the Thursday afternoon phenomenon among those who like their produce fresh and cheap.

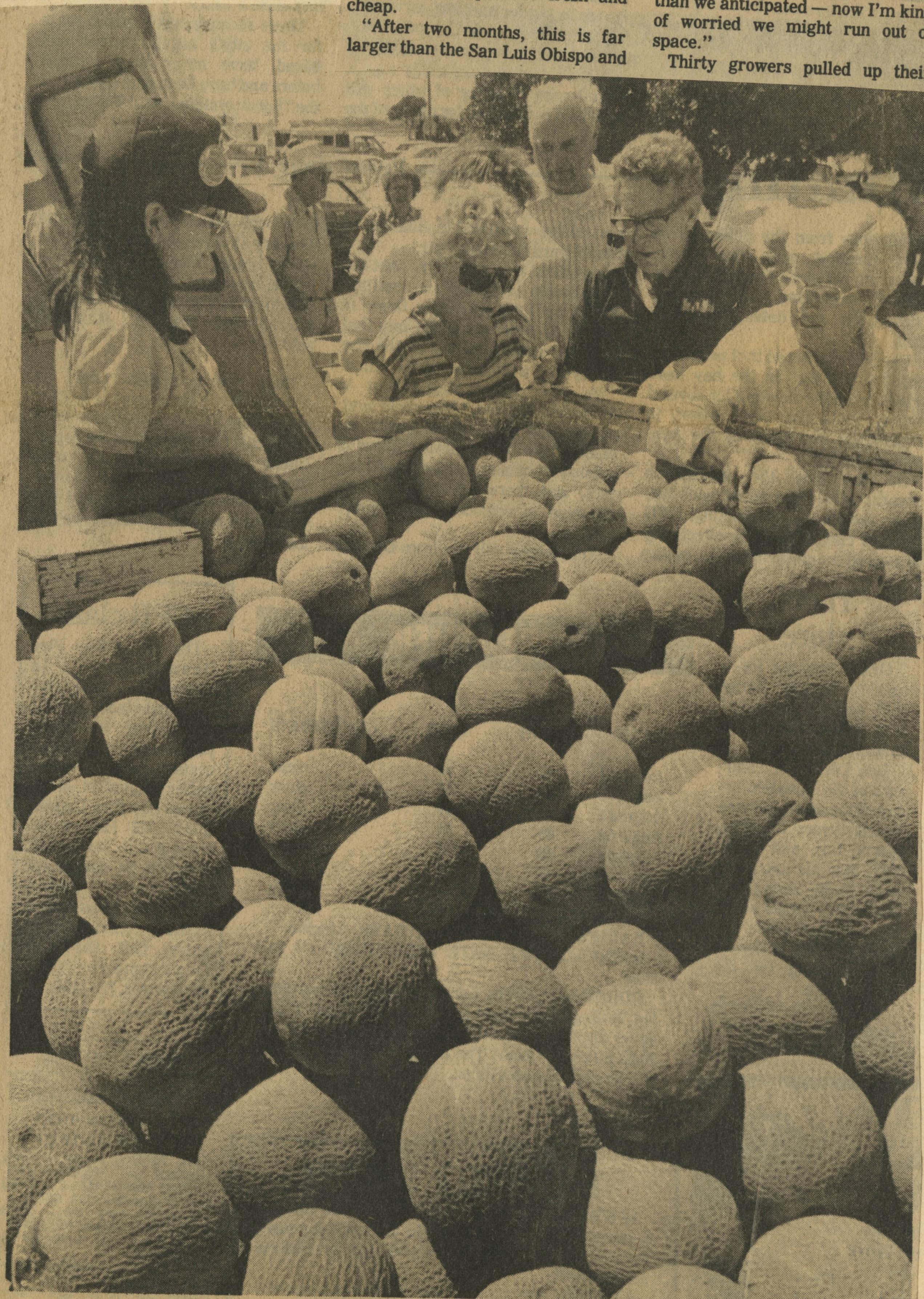
"After two months, this is far larger than the San Luis Obispo and

Arroyo Grande markets were two months after they opened," said market manager John Turner, surveying the bustling crowd while leaning against his truckbed full of vegetables. "It has gone far better than we anticipated — now I'm kind of worried we might run out of space."

Thirty growers pulled up their

trucks and cars to a corner of Young's Giant Food supermarket parking lot in North Morro Bay on a bright, sunny day to sell everything from apples to zucchini — more than show up at the Arroyo Grande version which is in its third summer, Turner said.

The reason, he said, is the hordes of customers who fill the spacious



A few of the hundreds of eager shoppers at the Morro Bay Farmers Market check out a truckbed full of ripe cantaloupes from Hanford. The Thursday afternoon outdoor market at the Young's Giant Food grocery store parking lot in North Morro Bay has grown much faster in its first two months than did the markets in San Luis Obispo and Arroyo Grande.

Photo by Pat O'Sullivan

parking lot to overflowing for the weekly two-hour selling session.

"They are ready to buy — if you have good stuff," advised Evelyn Fernamburg, perched on the edge of her open trunk with her offerings on a small table in front of her. She has been going to farmers markets for about three years and is on the San Luis Obispo County Farmers Markets board of directors.

This day she has about 24 avocados, some zucchini, some pole beans and a box of rarely-seen crabapples — all from her back yard garden.

"Walnuts are our main crop," she said, waving at the few bags of shelled nuts on her table. Her eyes scan her fellow sellers' tables.

"If I wasn't selling, I'd be having a ball going up and down buying things," she said. "We don't need to advertise — the best advertising for farmers markets is word of mouth."

The county farmers market group did buy one small newspaper advertisement when the market began in June after local residents supported the project through the Morro Bay Planning Commission and City Council processing. The city even went through the trouble of amending its zoning rules to allow the open-air market.

"The nicest part of the whole thing was that they (the city and residents) let us know they wanted us," said Turner.



Louise Fontaine buys produce from John Turner at the Morro Bay Farmers Market.



Arroyo Grande Farmers Market in Strother Park is a busy place on a Wednesday.

## Market farmers: 5 become 50

Linnea Waltz  
Staff Writer

Four years after a handful of growers brought their produce to sell at the first San Luis Obispo Farmers' Market July 28, 1978, the Saturday morning market scene has changed dramatically.

It doubled in size the first month. Now it is more than five times as large.

"We've gone from 5-9 growers the first year to upwards of 50 this year," said Charlotte Turner of Arroyo Grande, who, with her husband, John, were among those bringing their produce to the first sale.

The Turners were part of the group who began planning a farmers' market in the fall of 1977. "We saw the ad in the paper about the proposed market and, since we had a large garden, it sounded interesting," Mrs. Turner said.

The market began as a project of the Economic Opportunity Commission. The farmers named the Turners as managers in November 1980.

In July 1980, an Arroyo Grande Farmers' Market was opened, and in July 1981, one opened in Morro Bay. The Turners manage all three and are assisting in formation of the one contemplated for Templeton.

"Opening the other markets had no effect on the

San Luis Obispo market," Mrs. Turner said. "And the two others are nearly as large. A lot of growers have stands at all three."

Grower memberships are \$1 per year, and growers elect an advisory board with officers to work with the Turners.

Elmer "Buster" Mehlschau is president; Evelyn Fernamburg, treasurer; Glen Johnson, secretary.

Board members are Arnold Van der Linden, Bob Barde, Jim Park, Pam Stevens, Don Wells and Linda Yuma.

The Turners keep books on the markets and make quarterly reports to the advisory board.

"We have a set of bylaws which call for at least four meetings a year at which financial reports are submitted," Mrs. Turner said.

"We used last year's surplus to open the Morro Bay market. There are certain county and city fees to pay, and insurance on all three markets. There also is some spent for advertising and for the anniversary every year in August.

"However, we don't anticipate any surplus this year, since our fees are so low."

She said fees started at 10 percent of growers' gross sales, then dropped to 8 percent, then 5 and now 3.

With more growers the fees can be lower, she said. The same fee is charged at all three markets.

Since the organization is non-profit, the goal is to keep the fees low to attract growers. There is no stall fee. This encourages backyard gardeners.

Mrs. Turner said the market project "is a fun thing as well as business."

A list of rules and regulations are given all growers, who must sign an agreement stating they have read the regulations and agree to abide by them.

Growers are limited to the sale of their own food and produce items, and fees are collected at the end of each market day.

Each market has a definite starting time.

The San Luis Obispo market is 8 a.m. Saturdays at the Williams Bros. parking lot on Highway 227 just south of Orcutt Road.

The Giant Food parking lot on Main Street is the site for the Morro Bay market, which is Thursdays at 3 p.m. and, in Arroyo Grande, Strothers Park on Lopez Road at 3 p.m. Wednesdays.

Anyone interested in market space as a grower may call the Turners at 489-0889.

## It's a good harvest for everyone at the Templeton Farmers Market



**I**N THESE DAYS of exclusive exercise - sauna clubs, \$100 jogging suits, and expensive "health food" stores, what is healthy for the body may not be so wholesome for the pocketbook! There is an exception, however. Both buyers and farmers can stay in good health--in body and bankbook--at the county's weekly farmers markets, such as the North County Farmers Market in Templeton. Farmers can sell their produce

in the market at a higher profit than if they were to sell it wholesale. Buyers can buy fresher fruits and vegetables for less money than they would pay at the local supermarket. And the produce is definitely fresh, picked the day before or the day of the market.

Consumers have a wide variety of items to choose from. There are avocados, pistachios, almonds, pecans, dates, plants, flowers, oranges, yams, mushrooms, cabbage, broccoli,

cauliflower, leaf vegetables, carrots, onions, strawberries, even elephant garlic, eggs, and honey. Managers Leo and Rebecca Woods expect the market to get even bigger with the coming of the summers harvest of fruits and vegetables.

The sellers are not required to be residents of San Luis Obispo County, but all must be certified by their home county as growers or producers of what they sell. According to the Woods, however, 75 to 80 percent of the

sellers are from San Luis Obispo County, the exception being date farmers from Indio, Fresno farmers with pecans, and some orange sellers from the San Joaquin Valley.

Of the four Farmers Markets in the county (San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay, Arroyo Grande, and Templeton), the north county market is the most recently organized. It opened March 5th with about 16 sellers, and most were sold out within the hour. The market has now leveled off at about 26 sellers, and attracts between 300 and 500 buyers.

The immediate success of the market came as no surprise to Lee Henley, President of the Templeton Chamber of Commerce. The first organizational meetings for the market were



**the AGRARIAN**

held in the late summer or early fall of last year, but the idea for the market started even before that. Henley first became aware of the need for a farmers market in Templeton when an apple-growing neighbor, selling apples at a roadside stand, told him of her attempts to get a market started in Paso Robles. There she found all kinds of support, but no one was willing to give the market financial backing.

So, Henley put the proposal of having the market in Templeton before the Templeton Chamber of Commerce, where it was met with approval. The Chamber was able to give the organizers of the market the monetary and political support they needed. The Chamber helped the market organizers to the tune of about \$400, Henley estimates, helping to organize the market itself, and advertising the market's opening. The Chamber also helped convince the County Board of Supervisors to waive most of a \$500 permit fee.

The North County Farmers Market Association takes five percent of the sellers' gross sales, and, according to Henley, will eventually reduce that rate to three percent. The Association has already paid part of the money owed to the Templeton Chamber of Commerce, and Henley says he expects the remainder to be paid in full within the next six months or less.

In organizing the market, which is held every Saturday at the Templeton Livestock Company building on North Main Street, the Chamber had the help of John Turner, who manages the other three markets in the county. The four markets work with each other, rather than compete. For example, many of the farmers sell at two or more markets during the weekend. The Templeton Market was originally held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., but so many sell-

*continued on pg. 17*

#### FARMER'S MARKET

*continued from pg. 7*

ers were leaving the south county market early to reach Templeton in time for its mar-



**the AGRARIAN**

ket, that Templeton moved its hours ahead. It is now held from noon to 2 p.m., to accommodate the other markets.

Managers Leo and Rebecca agree that consumers come to the farmers market mainly with an eye for garden-fresh produce. Having all the sellers together in one place at one time makes it much easier for the buyers to get what they need, and more profitable for the farmers than selling at roadside

stands. Leo, a retired agriculture teacher from Los Angeles City Schools, says that shortly after he and his wife moved here, two years ago, they tried to sell their fresh sweet corn at a roadside stand.

"The money we made didn't even pay our water bill," Leo says. "We were very disappointed."

Then they discovered the Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo, where they were able

to sell all their produce at the going retail price. Leo credits the market's ability to "squeeze out the middle man" for making it profitable for the small farmer.

When Leo and Rebecca heard that the Templeton Market was in need of management, they volunteered their services. It is a job they enjoy, especially seeing the farmers deal directly with the consumers, finding out their needs and wants.

## STROTHER PARK IS PRODUCE CENTER ON WEDNESDAYS

# Farmers, Consumers Benefit From

By Steve Porter  
Staff Writer

ARROYO GRANDE — In the mood for some fresh, organically-grown spinach, or just-picked lemons? Or how about some ripe, greenhouse-grown tomatoes or cucumbers?

These and many more fresh produce items — grown in this area by local growers — are available every Wednesday afternoon in Arroyo Grande at the Farmers' Market.

Every week the cars, vans and pickups line up on the west side of Strother Park and the tables come out, to be piled high with fresh vegetables, nuts, fruits, honey and eggs.

Some days the park is full of shoppers, strolling from table to table searching for the best price on lettuce or broccoli. On other days — especially during the winter months — the crowds can be a bit thin, like now.

"We're in kind of a holiday lull," said John Turner last week. "This time of year is usually pretty slow."



Turner is manager for the San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market Association. A retired school teacher, he now collects the 3 percent fee growers pay to the association to cover the various health permits, insurance and other necessary paperwork required by the state. It also helps pay his salary.

As manager, he is also responsible for seeing that guidelines for farmers' markets are observed and that producers sell only what they raise themselves and are not buying from another

grower and re-selling it to the public.

"In other words, we want to keep the producer-to-consumer relationship," he explained.

The Farmers' Market in Arroyo Grande is one of four the association holds on a weekly basis, Turner said. There is also a market in Morro Bay on Thursday afternoons and two held each week in San Luis Obispo — one on Thursday evenings on Higuera Street and another Saturday mornings in the parking lot of Williams Brothers Market on

Highway 227.

The same producers generally go to all the markets each week as they follow the circuit, Turner said, although others participate on an occasional basis.

Last week, only about a dozen growers were selling their wares in Arroyo Grande, but Turner said in warmer weather the number is usually much higher.

"Some days we'll have as high as 50 growers," he said. "At our peak time we can sell about \$4,000 worth in a day."

Buster Mehlschau, a produce grower from the Edna Valley near San Luis Obispo, is one of the founders of the Farmers' Market. Mehlschau said the first market in San Luis Obispo had a modest debut in July of 1978.

"We started with just three sellers," he said but added that over the years the profitability of the markets as outlets for the small producer has spread "by word of mouth," and more have joined the association each year.

Mehlschau said another Farmer's Market is possible in the South County in the near future. Negotiations are continuing to establish one in the vicinity of the Grover Plaza in Grover City, he said.

Manager Turner said he believes the farmer's markets are good for both the growers and the public.

"This is a good outlet for the small grower, who really can't sell his produce to the big buyers," he said. "It's a good deal for the consumer, too, because they're able to buy good, fresh produce, usually below store prices."

Growers interested in learning more about the Farmer's Markets in San Luis Obispo County are invited to call Buster Mehlschau at 543-4498 or John Turner at 489-0889 after 7:30 p.m.



WANT TO BUY SOME LEMONS? — Buster Mehlschau of rural San Luis Obispo is a regular seller at Farmer's Markets throughout the county. Mehlschau is also one of the founders of the San Luis Obispo County Farmer's Market Association in 1978.

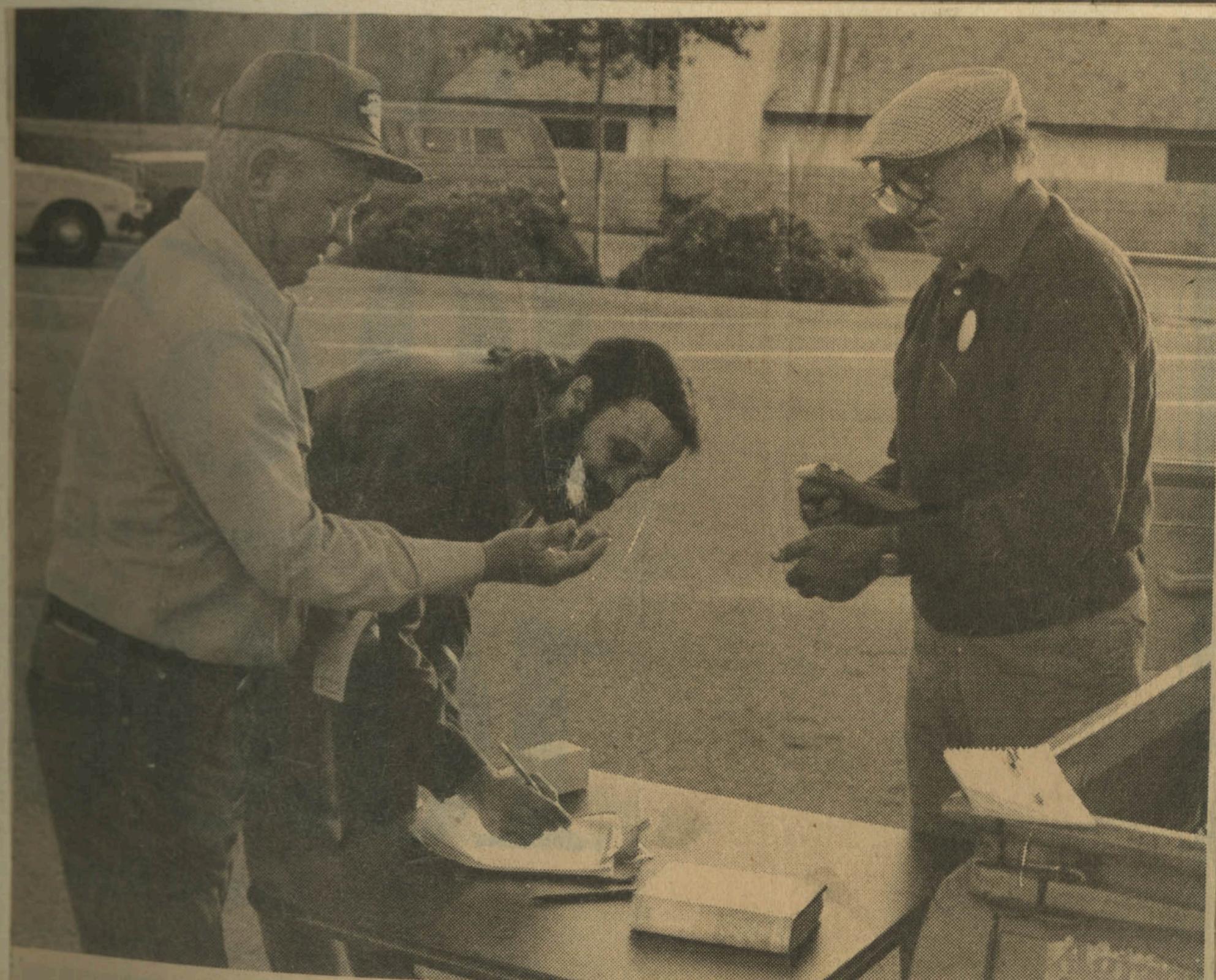
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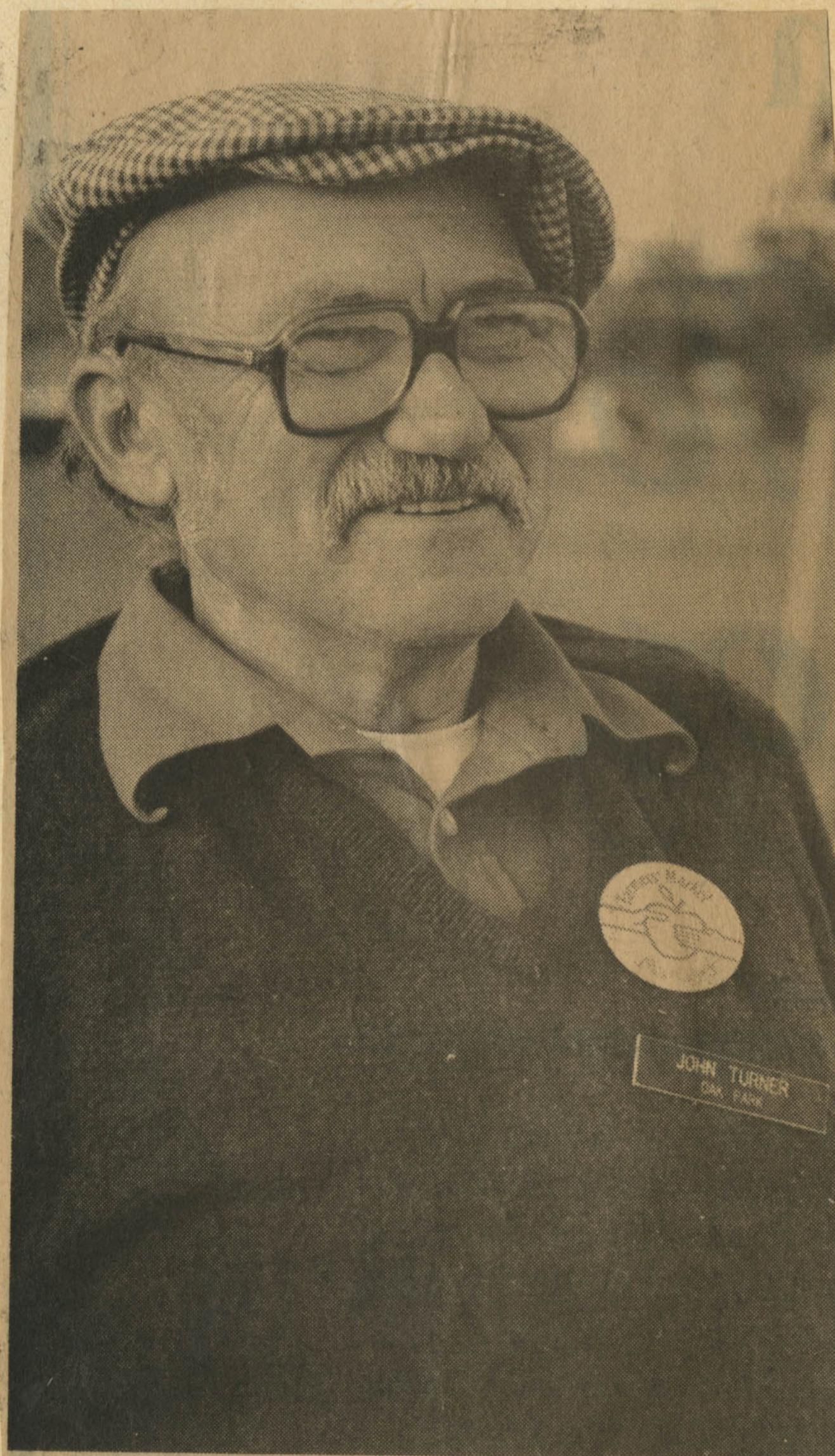
SELLING THEIR WARES — Christina Mina of rural Grover City (right) prepares to bag up a purchase by shopper at the Farmers' Market in Arroyo Grande. Every Wednesday afternoon throughout the year local

growers can be found selling their produce, eggs, nuts, honey and other foodstuffs on the west side of Strother Park.

Photos by Steve Porter



PAYING THEIR DUES — Two local produce growers settle up with manager John Turner at the end of an afternoon of sales at the Farmer's Market in Strother Park in Arroyo Grande.



FARMER'S MARKET MANAGER — John Turner of Arroyo Grande has been managing the San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market Association for four years, collecting 3 percent of the growers' gross sales and making sure they meet state requirements.

# Farm Bureau women's dairy show draws crowd

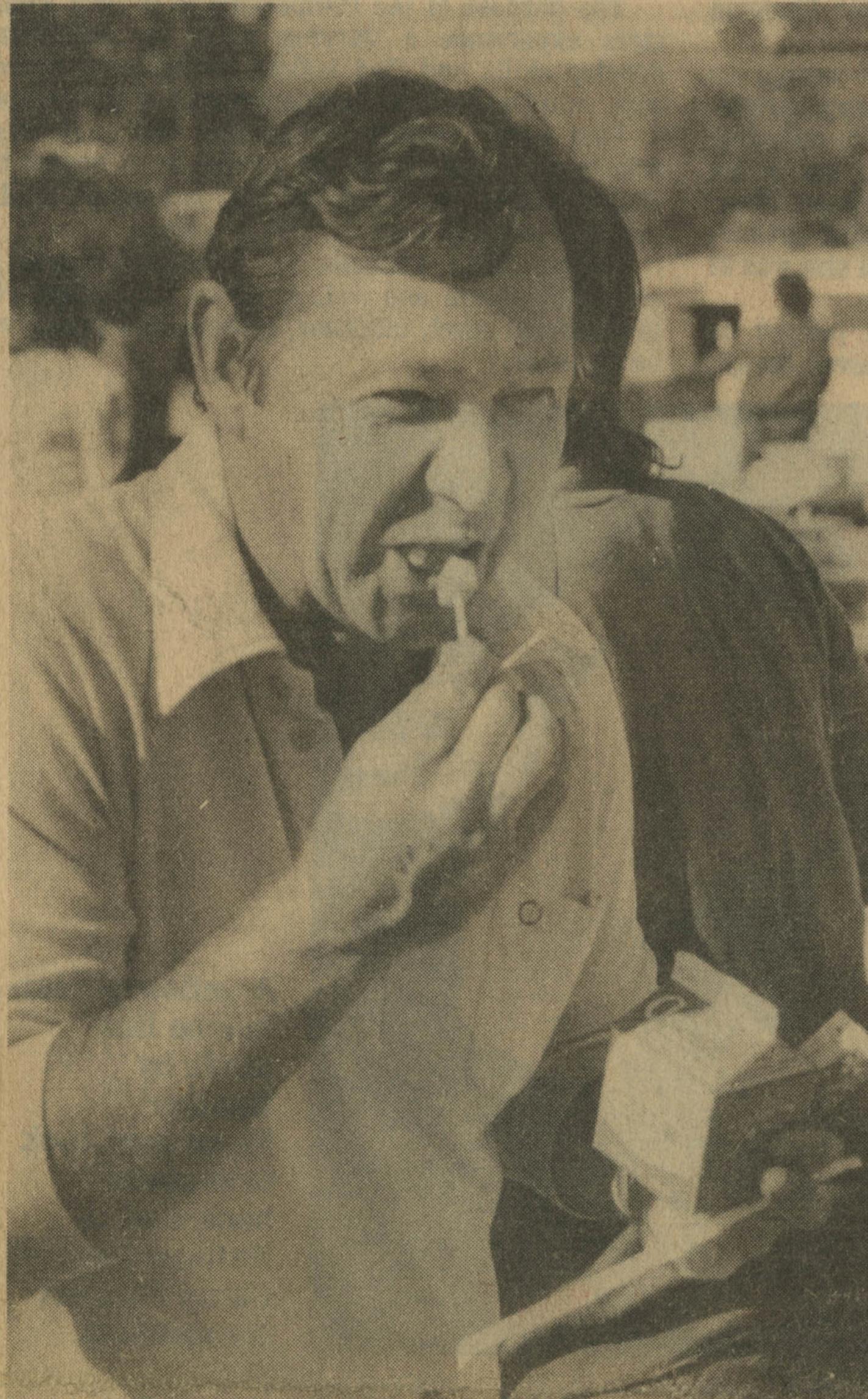
San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau Women got what they expected when they decided to promote June as Dairy Month — a crowd.

Headed by Doris Dixon of San Luis Obispo, the women participated in the San Luis Obispo Farmer's Market held Saturdays at Williams Brothers parking lot on Broad Street.

The women gave away 250 free individual-size cartons of milk, along with literature on why dairy products are nutritious.

People in the crowd also took home some recipes using milk.

The Farm Bureau Women "are hoping to make the public aware of the importance that dairy products have in our lives," said Dixon.



Jim Park of San Luis Obispo samples cheese at the Farm Bureau women's dairy promotion.



Janet Baird and 7-month-old twins, Jessica and Jamie, visit Marilyn Brit

DAVID MIDDLECAMP/TELEGRAM

FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 1984

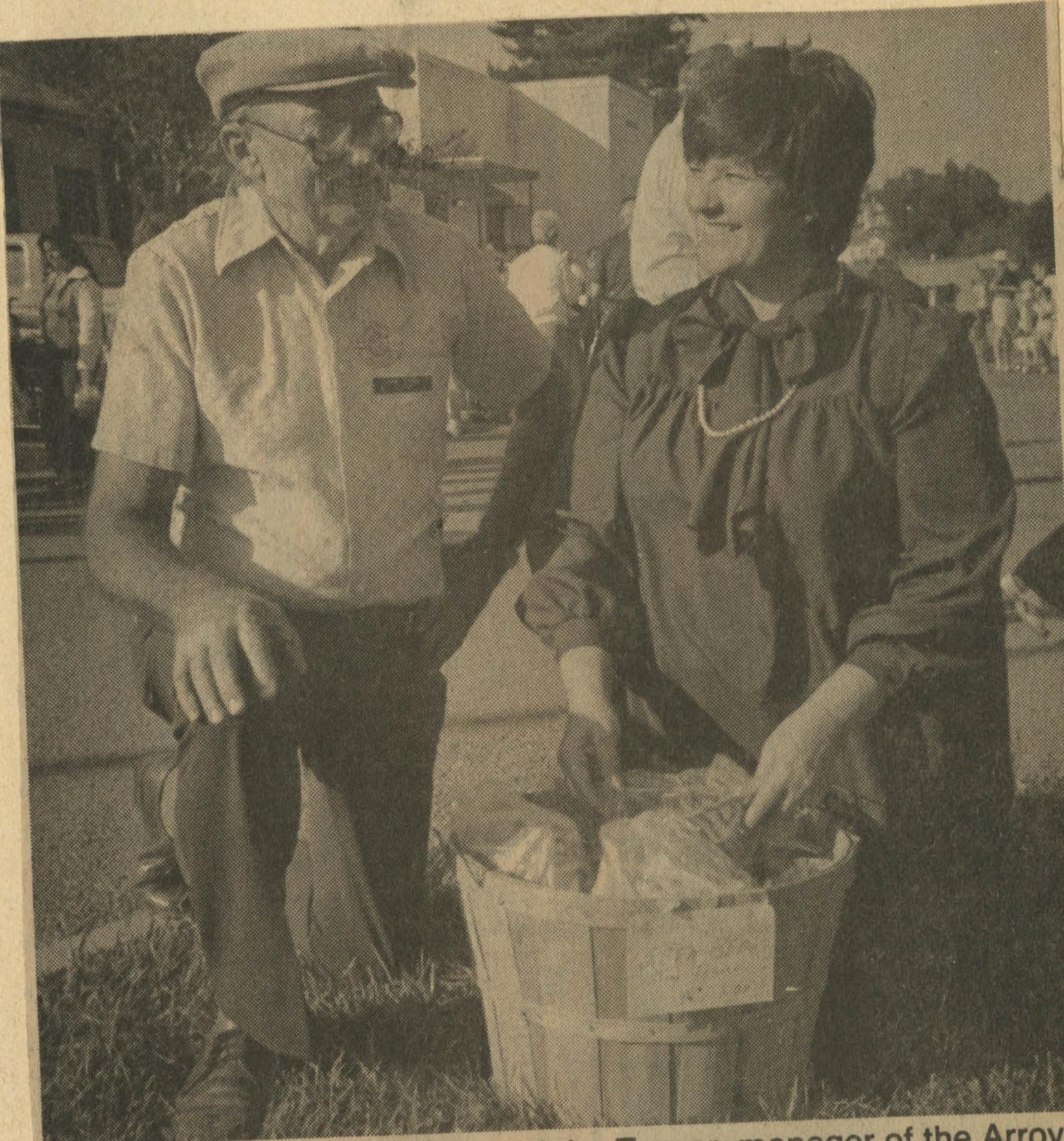


DAVID MIDDLECAMP/TELEGRAM-TRIBUNE

### A 12-wheeler goes to market

Katie Krupp pushes her husband, Bill, who in turn steers the stroller of his 18-month-old granddaughter, Jodi Zarkovich, as they wend their way through the Saturday Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo.

Fri., July 13, 1984—Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder, Arroyo Grande, Calif.



WELCOME TO CITY HALL — John Turner, manager of the Arroyo Grande Farmer's Market sells Arroyo Grande Mayor B'Ann Smith the first basket of beans from the relocated market, which was moved from Strother Park to behind Arroyo Grande City Hall. Held every Wednesday evenings, the market changed its starting time from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Photos by Glenn Bolivar

# *A taste of summer*

## Farmers Market marks second successful year

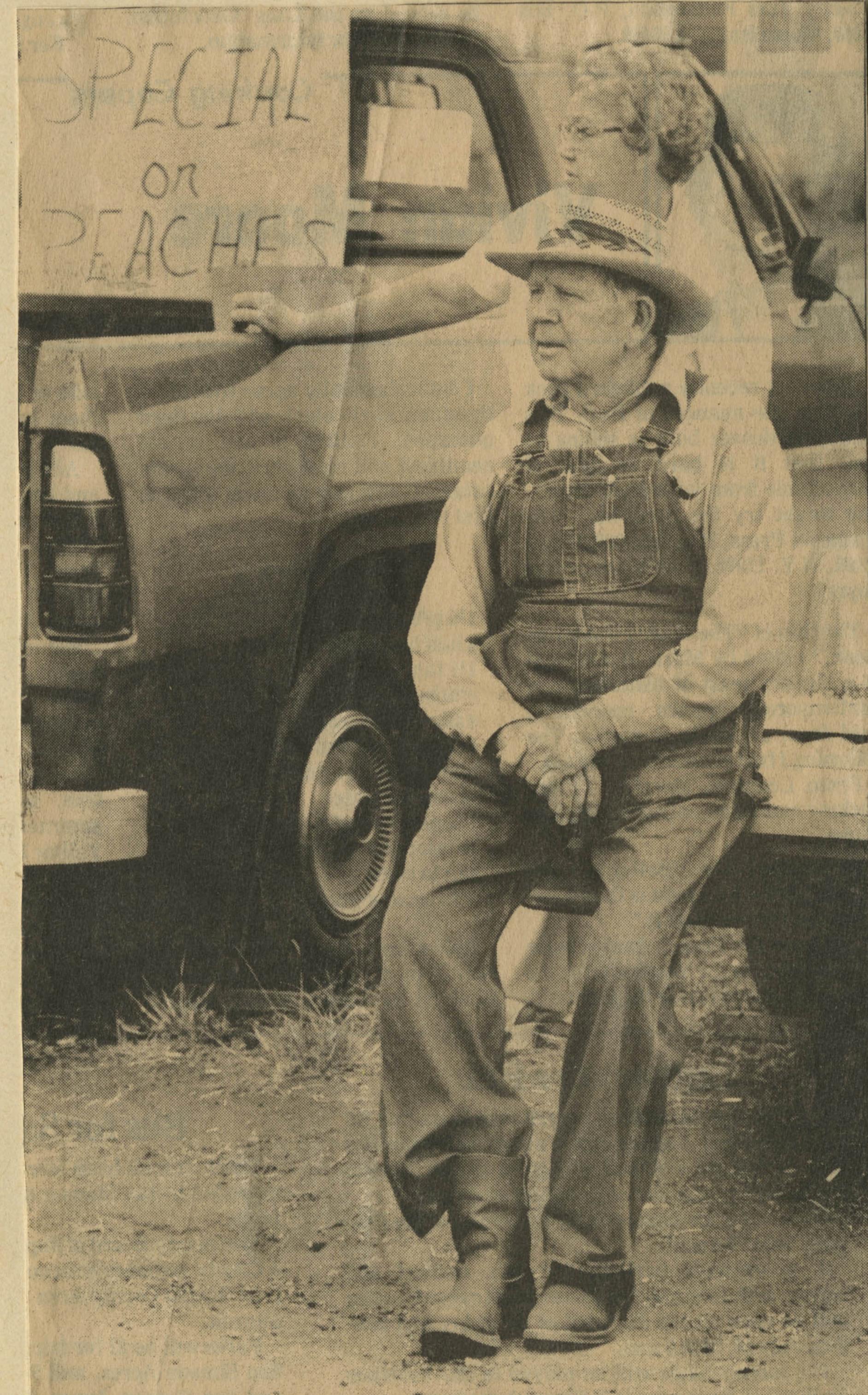
The few drops of rain that fell on Morro Bay July 18 didn't dampen the spirits of those attending the second anniversary celebration of the Farmers Market in the least.

Smiling faces are a trademark of the marketplace every Thursday afternoon, anniversary or not. They lend evidence that the chance to buy fresh local produce and other goodies is not the only reason the weekly event is such a big draw, filling Young's Giant Food parking lot with cars that overflow onto neighboring streets. The sense of camaraderie, of fellowship, make it almost a social event. The market also offers a tiny taste of European flavor, as buyers wander through the crowd, pausing to examine overflowing bins, baskets and boxes of everything from apples to zucchini.

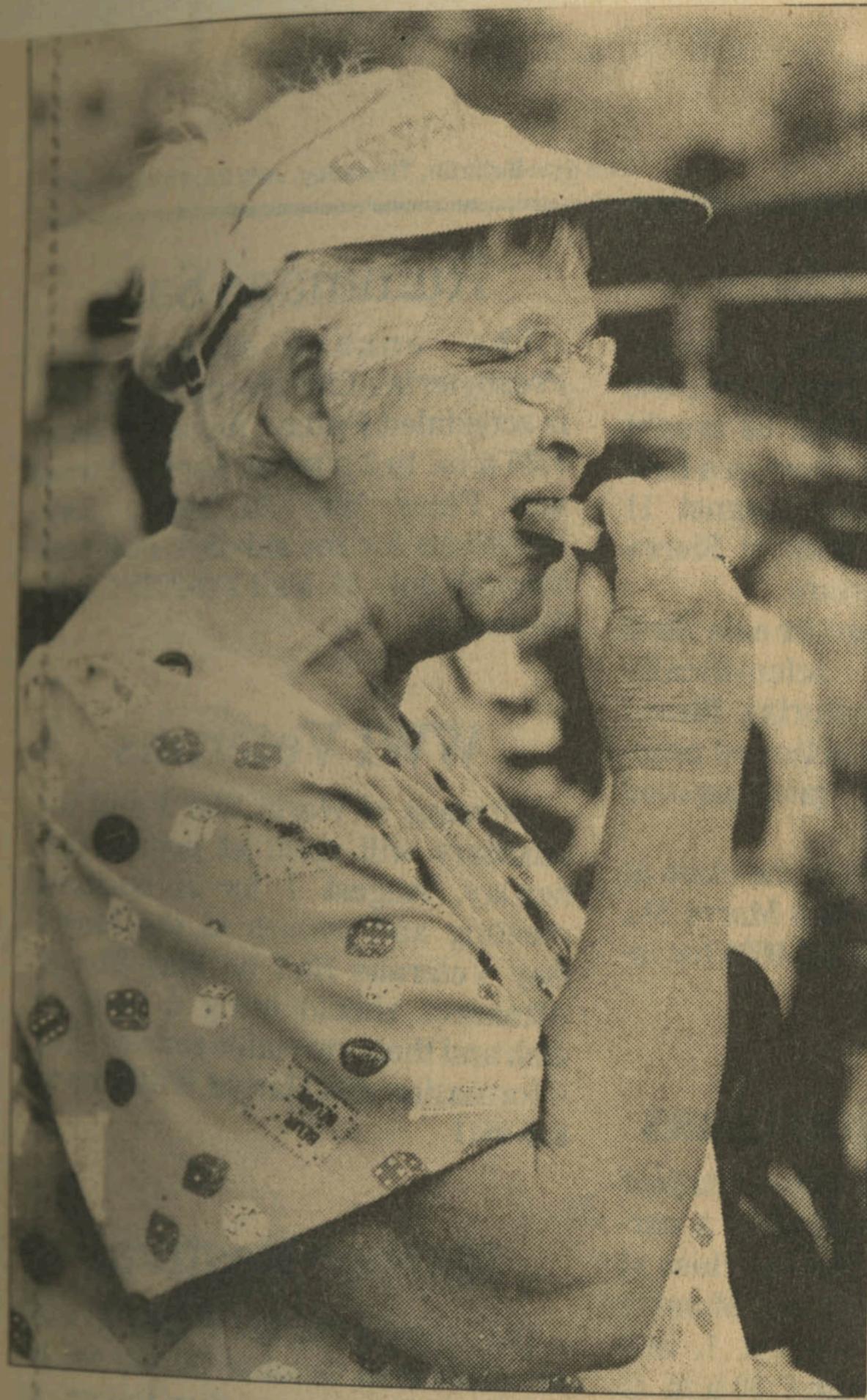
In honor of the market's anniversary, the San Luis Obispo County Farmers Market Association donated 20 \$5 gift certificates good for merchandise at Giant Food, which were given away by drawing.

Buyers were also regaled with the tunes of Fletcher Peck on the keyboard, backed up by Greg Shenk on drums and Marty Wright on saxophone. Singer Mary Louise Foster sat in, belting out the lyrics to a popular Billie Holiday tune called "All of Me."

The musicians were rewarded with edible "tips" for their efforts, sharing bags of fruits and vegetables presented throughout the afternoon by an appreciative audience.



Vendors come from as far away as the Central Valley to sell their goods, and range from "the real thing," (above) to young Cal Poly agriculture students wearing shorts and polo shirts.



Many vendors offer "try before you buy" samples of their goods. This shopper enjoys a wedge of watermelon as she looks off over the crowded parking lot.



Abduhl Karim Mashhoon helps his mom, Alma, by bagging squash and assembling cardboard boxes. At three years of age, Abduhl is a shrewd businessman and an eager worker. He has requested his own pair of gloves so he can help pick the vegetables his family harvests in Nipomo. He also has a passion for berries, as evidenced by the dark stains on his face.



Trevor Cowitch, age two, appears to take his job most seriously, as he protectively clutches a bouquet of dried flowers and waits for mom, Dana, and sister, Alyssa, who were busy with a purchase.



Thelma Findley, left, was one of 20 winners whose names were drawn to receive a \$5 gift certificate for Giant Food merchandise. Presenting the prize is John Turner, Farmers Market manager.

# FARMERS MARKET

Whether you want honey or nuts from the North County, veggies from the South County, flowers from coastal areas, or fruit from San Joaquin Valley, you'll find it all at the Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo.

When the whistle blows at 6:30 p.m. Thursday nights on Higuera Street, the action starts. It's the signal

for prospective buyers who have been ooohing and aaahing to start trading shekels for wares.

Like the outdoor markets of yore, it's a meeting place where neighbors gather. There's time for a chat, and shoppers often walk away with a bit of newfound friendliness tucked into their shopping bags.



Carol Turner of Arroyo Grande sells a zucchini recently.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 1984



Al Balfour of San Miguel eats yogurt while tending stand.



TONY HERTZ/TELEGRAM-TRIBUNE

The produce stand of the Hayashi family of Arroyo Grande draws a crowd every Thursday.



TELEGRAM-TRIBUNE PHOTO

Large crowds regularly fill Higuera Street on Thursday nights. Downtown merchants are struggling to minimize problems.

## Thursday night: Coping with success

By Carl Neiburger  
Staff Writer

It's been scarcely a year since a rib cookoff and a farmers market turned Thursday nights in San Luis Obispo into a street festival.

Now officials of the downtown Business Improvement Area, the city-affiliated group that sponsors the event, are struggling to cope with success.

"Thursday night has taken off to a point where we have got some potential problems," said Richard Westrope, chairman of the BIA.

More than 3,000 people descend on Higuera Street each week, said Westrope. That, he said, provides just what downtown business owners want — customers.

But it also has created problems that include people wandering into traffic, littering and bringing dogs into the farmers market area, he said.

Police Lt. Gary Grant said people riding bicycles and skateboards through the crowded area are also creating problems.

Thursday is traditionally the night for merchants to stay open late in downtown San Luis Obispo and for years was also "cruise night," when teenagers drove up and down Higuera and Marsh streets and clustered on sidewalks.

The cruising came to an end in July 1980 after the City Council approved a measure to barricade Higuera between Osos and Nipomo streets.

The Business Improvement Area announced plans then to sponsor regular events to encourage pedestrian traffic on Higuera Street, but these drew little excitement until July 1983, when downtown restaurants competed in a "Rib Cookoff."

That event drew 700 people to downtown San Luis Obispo. The farmers market moved downtown a week later.

"The whole thing started kind of spontaneously," said Westrope.

He said he has gotten calls from as far away as Ohio from business organizations asking San Luis Obispo's secret for success.

"It has created a lot of national

interest because we are the only ones that are doing it successfully," he said.

Darreld English, the BIA's Thursday night coordinator, said the BIA faces the problem of preserving the festive atmosphere while coping with large numbers of people.

"When we set this whole thing up," he said, "it was set up for 300 to 500 people. Now the whole game plan is different. We've had to grow more organized."

The organization includes mapping out the location of Higuera Street booths and events to make sure that fire engines could get in in case of an emergency.

Events will be kept to the east side of the street as much as possible, English said, because the Fire Department can reach buildings on that side from the rear to fight fires. Buildings on the west side of Higuera Street back up to San Luis Obispo Creek.

He said the BIA is seeking help from the public at large to solve other problems, like keeping the street clean of litter.

If people leave trash on the streets, he said, "there's nobody to come and clean up or anything. The police patrol, but there's only two patrolmen down there for 3,000 to 5,000 people."

Another problem is dogs — leashed and unleashed.

Grant said it is legal to bring leashed dogs downtown, but some people have been letting them run loose so they can get into areas where food is sold and create litter and health problems.

He said police will cite people who allow their dogs to run loose if they can find out who the owners are.

John Turner, manager of the farmers market, said even leashed dogs are a problem because the market's insurance says they are not allowed in the market area.

"We can keep the growers from bringing their dogs, but we can't do anything about the people doing it," he said. "We just don't know what to do about it."

Westrope said the BIA is asking people to leave their dogs home: "If we could get people to cooperate, ... it would help us."

# Thursday nights are when it all happens in Downtown San Luis

By ANDREA TROUTMAN

Some say it was the kids who were cruising the streets and milling about on the sidewalks on Thursday nights that drove the shoppers away.

Others believe the merchants on Higuera Street in downtown San Luis Obispo were losing customers to new shopping centers on the outskirts of town and in nearby Santa Maria.

Whatever the reason, almost everyone agrees that what's happening there now on Thursday nights has reversed the trend and is attracting thousands of people into the downtown area every week.

It's a full-blown affair, complete with a farmers' market, a large-scale rib barbecue and often top-rate entertainment, including the San Luis Obispo

County Symphony, the Cal Poly Marching Band and the San Luis Jazz Dancers.

"The combination of all this activity has become a real happening in San Luis Obispo on Thursday nights," said San Luis Obispo Mayor Melanie Billig. "Everyone really looks forward to it. They have dinner downtown and shop and visit with their friends and neighbors."

"There's just an air of good cheer and conviviality on the street," Billig added.

It all starts at 6 p.m., when the city blocks off Higuera Street from Oso to Nipomo streets. Local growers—sometimes more than 50 of them—pull their trucks into the area and begin setting up tables to display their lettuce, vegetables,



apples, walnuts, garlic and other fresh produce.

At the same time, farther down the street, restaurateurs from F. McLintock's Saloon, the Cigar Factory and the Old Country Deli barbecue ribs and sausage in portable pits that have been pulled out into the

street for the weekly cookouts.

While the aroma of barbecued meat permeates the air, people begin to arrive by the dozens—families with small children, senior citizens, students from Cal Poly and numerous others from throughout San Luis Obispo County.

Barbecued ribs and sizzle over a fire in a barbecue pit as Bruce M. McLintock, owner of F. McLintock's Saloon on Higuera Street in San Luis Obispo, supervises the cooking. The weekly cookouts and other activities are sponsored by the San Luis Obispo Improvement Assn. to encourage shoppers back to the downtown area on Thursday nights.

Photos by ANDREA TROUTMAN

The city started closing Higuera Street to traffic from 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursday nights in 1980, hoping to help the merchants, but the situation went from bad to worse. Because San Luis Obispo is a college town, and many students are gone on the weekend, merchants stay open late Thursday instead of Friday.

"We thought if the cruisers were gone the shoppers would come back," Westrope said, "but for two years, almost no one came downtown on Thursday nights, and eventually shops started closing down."

It was at that low point in late 1982 that Westrope and two other BIA members, Frank DuFault and Ken Porche Jr., formed a committee to organize activities on Higuera Street.

More than 250 letters were

sent to community organizations—the local Girl Scouts, the Audubon Society and various other civic clubs—to find groups that were willing to participate.

When only six responded, Mike Alamo, assistant director of the City Parks and Recreation Department, offered to help fill up the empty spaces.

In the spring of 1983, John Turner, manager of four farmers' markets in the San Luis Obispo area, approached the BIA with the idea of having his growers come to town on Thursday nights to sell fresh produce on the blocked-off Higuera Street.

Westrope was not enthused. "The idea of a bunch of farmers coming downtown, parking their trucks in the middle of the street and selling vegetables just did not appeal to me." But the other committee members decided to give it a try.

Turner brought in 40 or so growers on May 18, 1983, and soon after began attracting 300-

400 people each week.

Pleased with the progress, but still looking for ways to draw even greater numbers of people downtown, DuFault, who was president of the BIA at the time, hit upon the idea of having a rib cook-off.

While only 250 tickets were sold to the first rib cookoff, more than 4,000 people crowded onto Higuera Street to be part of the fun on July 11, 1983, according to F. McLintock's Bushnell.

Five restaurants cooked 250 ribs each (each ticket entitled the bearer to one rib from each restaurant) that day. A year later, seven restaurants cooked an average of 2,000 ribs each and attracted 7,000 to 8,000 people, he said.

Bushnell, who was the first restaurateur on Higuera Street to begin the outdoor barbecues on a weekly basis, termed the venture a success. His first time out, weeks before the first rib barbecue, he cooked 150 pieces of beef ribs. Today, Bushnell

and his staff average 1,500 to 1,700 ribs on Thursday nights.

"That, plus what we do inside the restaurant, represents a 100% increase over our profits on Thursday nights three years ago," Bushnell said.

Westrope, whose camera store has also doubled its profits in the last three years, estimates that about 4,000 people regularly come to town on Thursday nights now and that \$25,000 to \$30,000 worth of merchandise changes hands, creating increased profits for the merchants, the restaurants, the growers and the city (in increased sales tax revenues and business license fees).

But the total impact of Thursday night's activities cannot be judged by Thursday night profits alone, Westrope said.

"The impact is week-long," he added, "because people in town on Thursday nights see items in window displays that they may not purchase until a later date."

Mayor Billig, who said the city hasn't yet tracked the increase in revenues as a result of the Thursday evening activities, believes the money is revenue "secondary to what the BIA is trying to accomplish."

"We want to see a continued reaffirmation of our downtown as the core and focal point of our community," she said.

Bushnell agrees with Billig. "There's a larger benefit to what's happening on Thursday nights than just attracting people to spend money in the downtown stores," he said.

"We're really fighting to keep our downtown area a viable, county-wide shopping center in order to keep people from leaving the area to shop elsewhere. The Thursday night cookouts make the downtown area more attractive both for people bringing in business and for people coming to spend money," he said. "Thursday nights are helping to sustain the downtown area as a viable, exciting place to shop."

# The world is a stage at the SLO Farmers' Market

It's a practice carried on the world over. In Merida, Tangiers, Beijing and Bombay, villagers come to the market where farmers from outlying areas display their produce.

A giant smorgasbord of food and supplies is laid down the center of the street. Smoke from charcoal fires hazes about while townsfolk queue up for food from the street vendors. Like blackbirds on a telephone line they perch on the curbs teetering flimsy paper plates loaded with messy-but-good sweetbreads, ribs and sausage.

Small children break away from parents, playing tag among the bodies and overloaded tables creaking from a ton of melons and nuts.

Teen-age kids group together grooming each other affectionately, rearranging hair and articles of clothing. The girls resemble the boys in dress, but their face colors are dramatic and eye catching, reminiscent of Mandrill baboons that probably inspire their mimicry. The upper body clothes are a chaotic arrangement of layered shirts and jackets while the too-short pants flash white, green or pastel blue socks.

Their hair is shingled, often streaked, and cut in a long visor like shape that droops off to one side, shading one eye and giving a coquettish "woman behind the veil" effect. They primp, they strut. The market is their stage.

It all happens right here in San Luis Obispo on Thursday night.

A fine old tradition has come to flourish down Main Street (Higuera) where the entire town turns out for its weekly get-together.

As at a family reunion, the town reacquaints itself. Fashionably dec-



Ron Stob  
Back roads

adent punkers preen, children scream, adults jabber and wave and lovers, stuck together like taffy, move silently through the crowd.

The shops are all open, the lights are their brightest, everything seems to be on sale, stocks are at

Others, like Tom and Nancy, walk the whole length, looking, taking notes, doing comparisons. Then with a final sweep go back and pick up the good deals.

There is a certain amount of aimless herding, as people move with the flow, hooked on the conveyor of humanity that seems content to simply be there.

Occasionally they'll stop out of line to accept a slice of apple offered by a local grower or to stare at the street musician who plays guitar and harmonica. His high-top red tennis shoes, quilted pants,

*The street gourmets are out in big numbers. Lots of guys are offering to take their wives and lady friends out to eat on Thursday night.*

their fullest and the latest of everything is just being unpacked.

Farmers' trucks line the street like Saturday night in Pella, Iowa. Tables hold the vegetables and fruit spilling from the trucks like a cornucopia.

The nut farmers from Atascadero and Paso Robles offer great buys and generous samples. Cal Poly students urge passersby to try the new *Feijoas*, a tart fruit sometimes called pineapple guava. A lady from D&L's Onion Patch hawks mandarin tangerines — "No spray, no seeds. C'mon, try one."

An Oriental farmer with hands as big as cauliflowers holds out fresh broccoli to a customer, as fresh and green as you can find.

Some folks hurry along the market like it's the last shipment of farm fresh produce they'll ever see. They buy until their arms ache, then trudge on home, with that satisfied, tired look. They know they're going to be healthy.

plaid jacket and blond hair tied in a bun are a ridiculous curiosity. However, his little bucket was filling with contributions to the fine arts from a stunned but supportive audience.

The street gourmets are out in big numbers. Lots of guys are offering to take their wives and lady friends out to eat on Thursday night. They end up on the curbs of Higuera eating barbecued ribs, skewers of beef and vegetables and even fresh barbecued Morro Bay oysters on the half shell, a gourmet touch for 75 cents or 3/\$1.

Most of the portable barbecue pits are down by McLintock's, near Broad Street. By 5:30 p.m. the fires are going and at 6:30 p.m. Higuera is closed off from Osos Street on the north near Sully's to Nipomo on the south. Trucks loaded with produce wheel into position and instantly set up shop. In five minutes Higuera is transformed from boulevard to a country fair midway.

Thursday night is more than shopping and eating. It may be reviewing the lineup of '85 model cars when the auto dealers have their share of the street. The 4-H kids from Edna and far away Creston have been there, with their bleating sheep and chickens laying blue



PHOTO BY RON STOB

Cathy Breault and John Bushnell serve up spicy beans and barbecue to Thursday night crowd outside McLintock's.

eggs. Another night the Cal Poly band entertained near Garden Street.

The social events are the third ring of this Thursday night circus. Nov. 29, Renaissance dancers and singers will kick off the Renaissance Fair Logo Competition, and city kids will decorate a Christmas tree — a gift from the Business Improvement Association of the

city.

On Dec. 6, Santa Claus comes to town with roving carollers helping set the tone for Christmas. Then on the 13th, Santa Claus will be riding into town with real snow available to the kids for snowman making. Should be fun.

Hardly Back Roads you say? Just imagine it's Merida, or Tangiers, or Beijing or Bombay.

# HERE COMES FARMERS MARKET PB Continues Open-Air

## Market Tradition

By Elaine Wohl  
Staff Writer

PISMO BEACH — Farmers Market is coming to town.

The new open-air market will join already existing markets in Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay that are run by the San Luis Obispo County Farmers Market Association.

Pismo Beach's version will start off with a big whack Sunday, June 23, as Mayor Nebb Eldwayen is scheduled to slice a cabbage in half during opening ceremonies beginning at 1 p.m.

Farmers Market will then be held every Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the 200 block of Hinds Street.

"We like to get people into Pismo Beach and we want to offer them something nice," said Brian Koch, president of the city's Business Improvement Group. BIG, as the group is known, was instrumental in bringing the produce vendor operation to the beach resort town.

"I'm just looking forward to this event and hope it will be a big success," he said.

Whether the market draws crowds remains to be seen, said John Turner, manager of the Farmers Market association, a non-profit, mutual benefit cooperative.

"You have to have a variety of

produce and of course a lot of customers who can find what they're looking for," he said. "We can't really anticipate what's going to happen."

Turner said he hopes at least 30 farmers participate in the market and expects some to come from as far away as the San Joaquin Valley.

The Arroyo Grande Farmers Market draws roughly 30 farmers on Wednesdays, he said.

To break even on the Pismo market, said Turner, growers would have to sell at least \$1,600 worth of produce.

The association receives 3 percent of the gross sales that enables it to pay the overhead, he said.

The San Luis Obispo downtown Farmers Market was the last to open. That was two years ago and it is now the most profitable, said Turner.

The existing markets combined brought farmers \$508,000 in 1984, he said.

Whether to continue as yet unopened Pismo Beach Farmers Market will be a decision made by the association's nine-member governing board.

But Turner said the time is ripe for another operation.

"If we don't open the market," he said, "someone else is liable to."



**FARMERS MARKET** — Residents visit the Arroyo Grande Farmers' Market last Wednesday. Plans are now in the works for a new Farmers Market in Pismo Beach scheduled to open Sunday, June

23. The market is to be conducted from 1 to 4 p.m. in the 200 block of Hind Street.

Photo by Glenn Bolivar

# CALIFORNIA BUSINESS

## BUSINESS IN THE WEST

Celebrating 20th  
ANNIVERSARY  
1963-1983



Both buyers and sellers reap rewards at farmers' markets; growers earn extra dollars and consumers buy fresher produce.

### FARMERS' MARKETS BEAR TIMELY FRUIT

■ As state certified farmers' markets gain popularity among consumers statewide, farmers are seeing the fruits of their efforts turn into revenues that totaled an estimated \$50 million in 1984. More than 85 certified farmers' markets have sprouted up in California since 1977, when the California Department of Food and Agriculture eased standard packaging, grading and container regulations on produce sold at markets where growers certify that they, or family members, have grown the produce being sold. Now an estimated 2,000 farmers are acquiring a taste for entrepreneurship as consumers flock to farmers' markets in their quest for freshly grown fruits, vegetables and nuts.

"Farmers' markets represent one of those few win/win situations," says Jeff Jacobs, spokesman for the Department of Food and Agriculture office in Sacramento. "Growers get a better market and consumers get fresher produce than they would in a supermarket." In fact, growers see a return on goods sold through farmers' markets of about 56 cents per consumer retail dollar, the rest goes to marketing. The 56

cents goes to labor, production costs and profit, says Gail Hayden, statistician for the Department's direct marketing program. That's about 50 percent more than the return per consumer retail dollar from produce sold through traditional channels, where farmers foot heftier bills for commercial marketing costs.

Revenues earned by farmers through certified markets in the last two years represent less than 1 percent of a total \$14 billion agricultural purse in California, says Hayden. Of that purse, fruits, vegetables and nuts brought in revenues of about \$5.5 billion. While it's true that the produce sold through certified markets have not stood up to strict standards for packaging, labeling and grading, it is by no means second-rate food, says Hayden. All produce sold in certified markets must meet basic quality and maturity standards and must bear the approval of the county agricultural commissioner.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF JACOBS

PISMO BEACH  
FARMERS MARKET

EVERY SUNDAY

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm  
or until sold out

LOCATED ON HINDS AVE

Between Dolliver & Cypress St

Sponsored By The Pismo Beach Business Improvement Group

# CAPTURED 53 AWARDS AT FAIR At 70, This Lady

## Knows Her Produce Garden

By Elaine Wohl  
Staff Writer

ARROYO GRANDE — It was a crazy request, asking a 70-year-old woman for a rag to wipe the dew off an overgrown pumpkin lodged in her garden—just so she could sit on the orange vegetable for a photograph.

Crazier still was Evelyn Fernamburg literally sprinting off, only to return with the desired rag. She plunked down on the pumpkin seat and flashed a photogenic smile.

Those who know her may not be surprised at her agility, nor would they raise an eyebrow after learning that she has won enough fair produce awards in her lifetime to piece together three quilts.

At the recent Mid-State Fair, Fernamburg brought literally dozens of fruits and vegetables for competition. When it was all over, the septuagenarian carted home three sweepstakes awards, 35 first place awards, 10 second-place mentions and four third-place awards.

But with boxes and boxes of ribbons already in her closet, the majority of awards went home in name only. Leaving the other ribbons at the fair for future use, Fernamburg was content to leave with just the three sweepstakes awards.

She had entered 53 fruits and vegetables. All but four were recognized as worthy of an award. Fernamburg captured first place in the sweepstakes award for grains, second-place sweepstakes award for small fruits and berries and third place sweepstakes award for her vegetables.

What did Evelyn Fernamburg bring to the fair? She brought striped Gravenstein apples, black Mission figs, Placentia walnuts, Mexican red beans, Himalaya berries, Haas avocados and more, more, more.

The best the bespectacled woman can do when complimented on her achievement is laugh. One minute a friend is telling her that the number of awards merits a newspaper story and the next minute a reporter calls asking for an interview.

Fernamburg may not handle media interviews every day, but she handles them with aplomb. After a lifetime of tending to her garden, her diligence has born fruit—and media exposure.

"All my life I have liked to plant things," she said. "That's where I get my exercise."

Her exercise includes 6 acres of

walnuts and 1½ acres of fruits and vegetables at the ranch four miles outside of Arroyo Grande on Lopez Drive.

Evelyn and Frederick Fernamburg have lived on the ranch since 1937.

In that time, Evelyn Fernamburg has been active in 4-H youth projects and served as a member of the county school board for 17 years. And always, there was the garden.

Even her childhood memories are intertwined with gardens. She remembers her brother harnessing her up to a hand cultivator to work the family garden. She didn't mind.

What she did mind was not having enough water during the summer months to keep the garden going. She vowed that as an adult she would have plenty of water for her garden.

Her wish came true after she married and moved to the Lopez Drive ranch. But it wasn't until the 1950s, when she would take 4-H youngsters to fair competitions, that she began to think of entering herself.

Fernamburg broke the ice in 1956, when among various homegrown produce, she sent oranges, apricots, yellow Dent corn, avocados and parsley to the 1956 Mid-State Fair.

She won an award for almost every entry.

Since then, Fernamburg produce has been entered sporadically in both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo County fairs. Most entries have been prize winners.

The successful gardener hasn't lost the competitive edge.

"It gets in the blood," said Fernamburg. "It's a challenge."

She competes with friends, "and that's what makes it fun." The kind of fun that carries no hard feelings when one friend trudges home with fewer awards.

The woman who hauled in the biggest beet and onion at the Mid-State fair this year said her good fortune is a matter of hard work, luck, timing and the natural elements.

"There's a lot of work connected with getting stuff ready for the fair," said Fernamburg.

Yet she insists she is no slave to her garden. Whatever happens, Fernamburg said, she takes in stride.

This attitude, she said with a laugh, "is what you get from growing older."

But Fernamburg is the first to admit how much her garden means.

"There's my soil," she said. "No one can take it away from me—as long as we pay our taxes."



**TURBAN SQUASH** — Rural Arroyo Grande resident Evelyn Fernamburg displays some of the turban squash she grows in her garden. A similar specimen won a first place award for Fernamburg at the Mid-State Fair in Paso Robles this year. Photo by Elaine Wohl



**AWARDS, AWARDS, AWARDS** — Evelyn Fernamburg of Arroyo Grande displays just a portion of the fair awards she has won over the years at the Santa Barbara County and Mid-State fairs. Photo by Elaine Wohl



**IN A PUMPKIN PATCH** — Evelyn Fernamburg feels right at home in her rural Arroyo Grande garden. The septuagenarian has something of an unusual green thumb in that she has captured an

enormous amount of fair awards for her garden produce over the years.

Photo by Elaine Wohl

# AG Farmers Market Switches

FIVE CITIES

**Times-Press-Recorder**

SERVING SOUTH SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY SINCE 1887

Fri., Nov. 22, 1985

Sec. B, Page 1

## to Saturdays



FARMERS MARKET — Local residents enjoy the produce and other goods offered at the Arroyo Grande Farmers Market, to be held downtown on Saturdays.

Photo by Glenn Bolivar

ARROYO GRANDE — Farmers Market was faced with cold reality: Shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables on wintry Wednesday afternoons wasn't proving popular with local residents.

But instead of giving up, Farmers Market in Arroyo Grande moved. Moved not to a new location, but a new time and day.

Gone are the days when residents must brave Wednesday winds to buy Farmers Market produce behind City Hall. Starting last week, growers began offering their wares on Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m.

Farmers Market expects the change to bring nothing but good.

"The Arroyo people won't come out when it's dark and cold," said John Turner, Farmers Market manager. "We have no doubt this will be much better."

Last Saturday's event attracted 25 growers, a higher than normal figure for this time of the year, he said. Grower participation traditionally peaks in the summer and slows in the winter.

By the time the Arroyo Grande City Council approved the market change last week, Turner had already conducted research to find out whether the change would meet with grower and buyer approval.

Both grower and customer response was overwhelmingly in support of the time and day change, he said.

By switching the event from Wednesday to Saturday, Farmers Market is avoiding the fate of the Pismo Beach market, which closed for the winter.

"There just wasn't enough growers showing up," said Turner.

The Pismo Beach market opened for the first time in late June and continued until Nov. 3. The market was conducted from 1 to 4 p.m. Sundays.

Business Improvement Group, composed of downtown Pismo Beach businesses, wants the market moved to another location and held at a different time, said Turner.

He said there is a good chance that will happen, but not until early summer next year.

Sept. 27, 1985—Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder, Arroyo Grande, Calif.



FOOD BARGAINS — Shoppers crowd the Car Corral in the Village as part of a special Farmers Market Wednesday in the Arroyo Grande Village.

Every Wednesday, area growers get together to offer direct-to-the-public bargains.

Photo by Glenn Bolivar

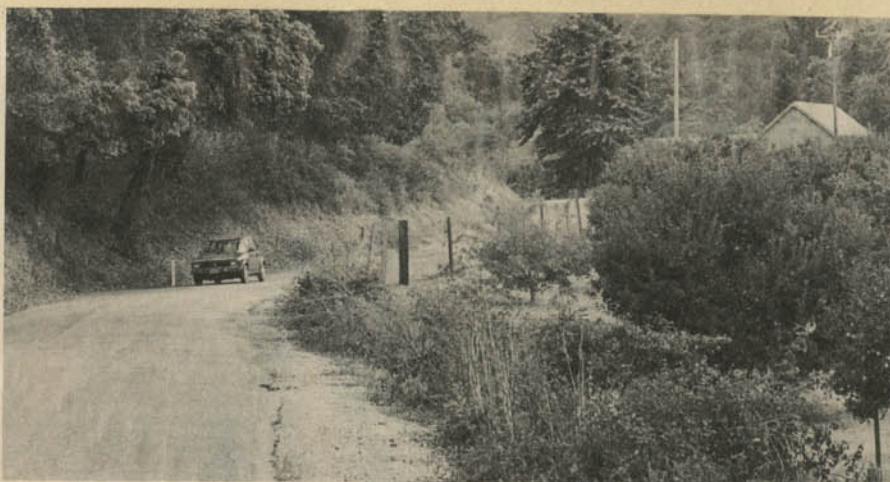


HARVEST FESTIVAL  
ARROYO GRANDE  
SEPT. 1985





*Homemade signs compete for attention along road to See Canyon apple growers*



*Oaks overhang winding See Canyon Road, while apple trees fill narrow valley's precious flatland, just a few miles off U.S. 101*

## Small farm detours in San Luis Obispo County

Apples, almonds, berries, garlic, markets, and much more . . . just off U.S. 101

*He grows 'em, she bakes 'em. At farm shop east of Cambria, the Linns sell pies and preserves made with homegrown fruit*



"Ag's my bag," boast the bumper stickers in San Luis Obispo County. Cooperative extension brochures here echo the point: "Small farms are big business."

Endowed by geography with a variety of favorable agricultural microclimates—from sea-cooled valleys to hotter-than-blazes inland stretches—the county produces a wide range of crops. Within a few miles of each other, you'll find apple trees growing on hillsides that freeze in winter and avocado trees rooted in soil that stays warm enough for winter flowering.

Short detours off U.S. Highway 101 show you the area's bounty. Eight weekly farmers' markets—three of them new this past spring—showcase the crops of local growers. We also suggest a sampling of easy-to-reach farms that sell direct. If you have time, explore smaller scenic byways on your own; here roadside farm stands spring up in season.

September and October see the most crops for sale: almonds, many apple varieties, Hass avocados, green beans, beets, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chard, sweet and Indian corn, cucumbers, eggplant, figs, garlic, grapes and raisins, leeks and onions, lemons, melons, peaches, pears, green and red bell peppers, jalapeño peppers, plums, pumpkins, quince, raspberries, squash and squash blossoms, snow and sugar peas, strawberries, tomatoes, and walnuts.

Also look for cut flowers, honey, dried herbs and herb plants, fresh quail eggs, brown chicken eggs, newly pressed cider, and earthworms. At the markets, the rule of thumb is this: if it's the first harvest of a particular crop, prices may be only a little below supermarket level; further into the harvest, prices will drop. You find consistently lowest prices at the farms themselves.

### **Eight farmers' markets to visit, Arroyo Grande to Paso Robles**

These weekly get-togethers are lively social occasions, but the shopping is serious business. Arrive early for best selection and least crowding. San Luis Obispo's Thursday market has the air of a street fair, and entertainment abounds; some others are casual, parking-lot affairs.

Here's the list, south to north. For details on the first five—the south county markets—call Charlotte Turner at (805) 481-3276; leave a message on her recorder if need be. For the last three—in the north county—call Leo Wood at 466-7845 (let it ring). Directions are from U.S. 101.

**Arroyo Grande**, 6 to 8 Wednesdays. Exit east at the Arroyo Grande exit (Branch Street); go about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile to City Hall. The market is in the lot behind.

**Pismo Beach**, 1 to 4 Sundays. Exit on Price Street; go two blocks north, parallel to U.S. 101, to Hinds Street; turn left. The market is between Dolliver and Cypress streets.



*Knee-deep in strawberries, visitors to Kaminaka Farms put some muscle into their picking*

JERRY FREDRICK



*Buy a wedge or a wheel of jack or cheddar. The stucco milk bottle's been a dairy symbol south of Templeton for more than 30 years*

KENT CLEMENCO

**San Luis Obispo**, 6:30 to 9 Thursdays. Exit east on one-way Marsh Street; look for side-street parking. Walk north from Marsh one block to Higuera. The market fills the 600, 800, and 900 blocks, with the 700 block devoted to walk-away food stalls. (November through May, only the 700, 800, and 900 blocks are in use.)

**San Luis Obispo**, 8 to 10:30 Saturdays. Exit on Marsh Street as above; go east four blocks to Broad Street (State 227) and turn right. Go about 1 1/4 miles to the parking lot of Williams Brothers Markets.

**Morro Bay**, 3 to 5 Thursdays. Take State Highway 1 approximately 13 miles northwest from San Luis Obispo. At the State Highway 41 exit, turn right on Atascadero Road, then quickly turn left on Main Street. Go north 1/2 mile to the parking lot of Young's Giant Food supermarket at 2650.

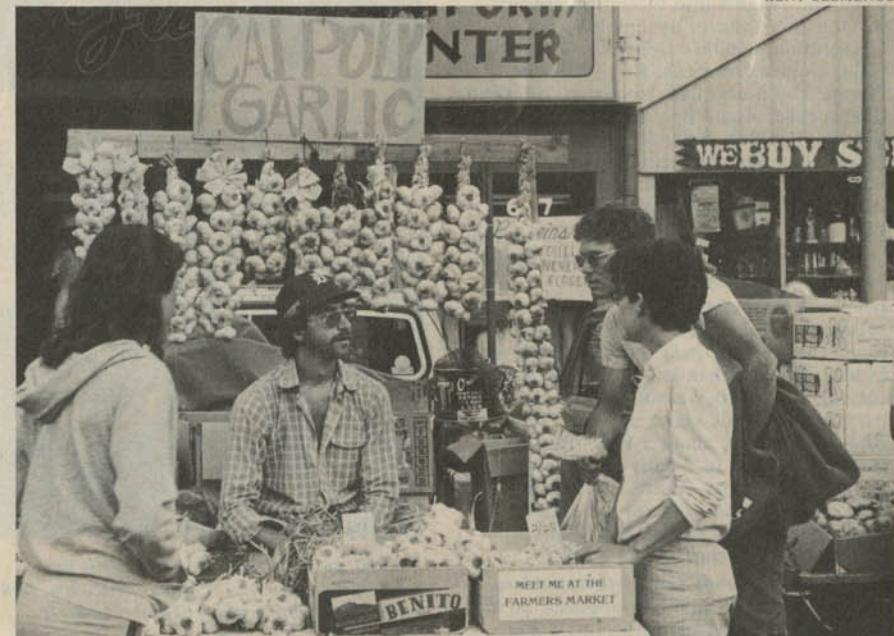
**Atascadero**, 5:30 to 9 Wednesdays. Exit northeast on State 41. Take the first right turn, onto El Camino Real. Go about a block to the parking lot of the Adobe Plaza shopping mall (the 7000 block).

**Templeton**, noon to about 2 Saturdays. Exit at Main Street; go south about 1/4 mile to the Templeton Livestock Auction facility.

**Paso Robles**, 5:30 to 8 Tuesdays. Exit north at Spring Street; at 12th Street, go right one block to Park Street. The market is between 12th and 13th streets.

#### Or stop by the farm

With a good local map in hand, you can easily reach these farms from U.S. 101. We note what's for sale now, and whether to call ahead; area code is 805.



*Campus-grown garlic, by the braid or by the bulb, is popular with shoppers at Thursday evening farmers' market in downtown San Luis Obispo*

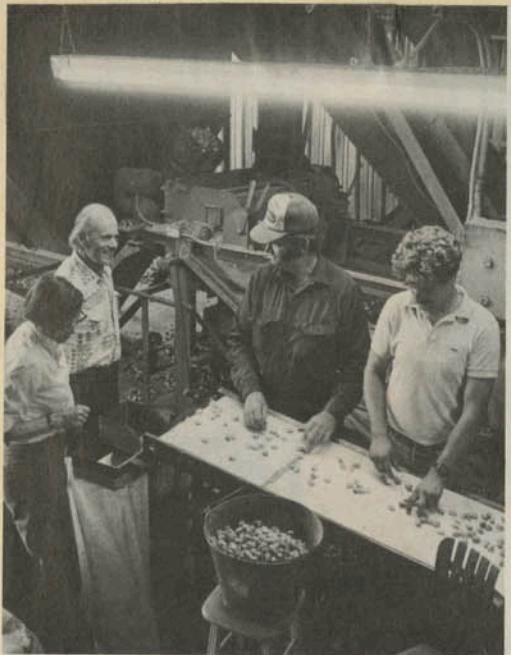
**U-pick near Nipomo**. Exit U.S. 101 southwest on Tefft Street; turn right on Pomeroy Road and go 3 miles to Kaminaka U-Pick Farms, open 9 to 5 Thursdays through Sundays; 929-1374. Pick beets, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, peppers, raspberries, strawberries, tomatoes. This is the best U-pick place we've seen.

**For fresh lemons**. Exit northeast on Tefft and go 1.6 miles to Garrison's (at 512), amid Eureka lemon groves; call first: 929-

3904. Sales by the case are encouraged.

**Avocados in Arroyo Grande**. Take the Traffic Way off-ramp; go two blocks to Allen Street and turn right to 415; 489-3596. Daily from 8 to dusk, serve yourself at curbside: Hass now, Bacon and Zutano other months.

**Hass and history**. At the north edge of Arroyo Grande, exit north on Oak Park Road; continue as it becomes Noyes Road, a total of 1.9 miles from 101, to Wiley



Almonds roll along conveyor at Jardine Organic Ranch west of Paso Robles. Visitors may watch sorting process

Ranch at 1626 Noyes; 489-3758. Hours are 10 to 5 weekends for sales of avocados, elephant garlic, herb plants, lemons. Ask to see the early 20th-century steam-traction engines and other restored farm equipment.

**Apple-scented See Canyon.** Exit west on San Luis Bay Drive; go 1½ miles to See Canyon Road and turn right. In less than 5 miles, you'll pass 12 apple growers open daily mid-August into November. Major varieties (in order of availability) are Gravenstein, Mollie's Delicious, Tohoku, Gala, Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Pippin. You'll also find Jerseymac, Macoun, Chesapeake, Rome Beauty, Winesap, Blushing Golden, Splendor, Arkansas Black, Stayman, Spitzenberg, Criterion, Bellflower, Red Gold, McIntosh, Winter Banana. There's also fresh cider.

This valley, settled by the Swiss family that became famous for candy-making, offers a beautiful drive any time of year.

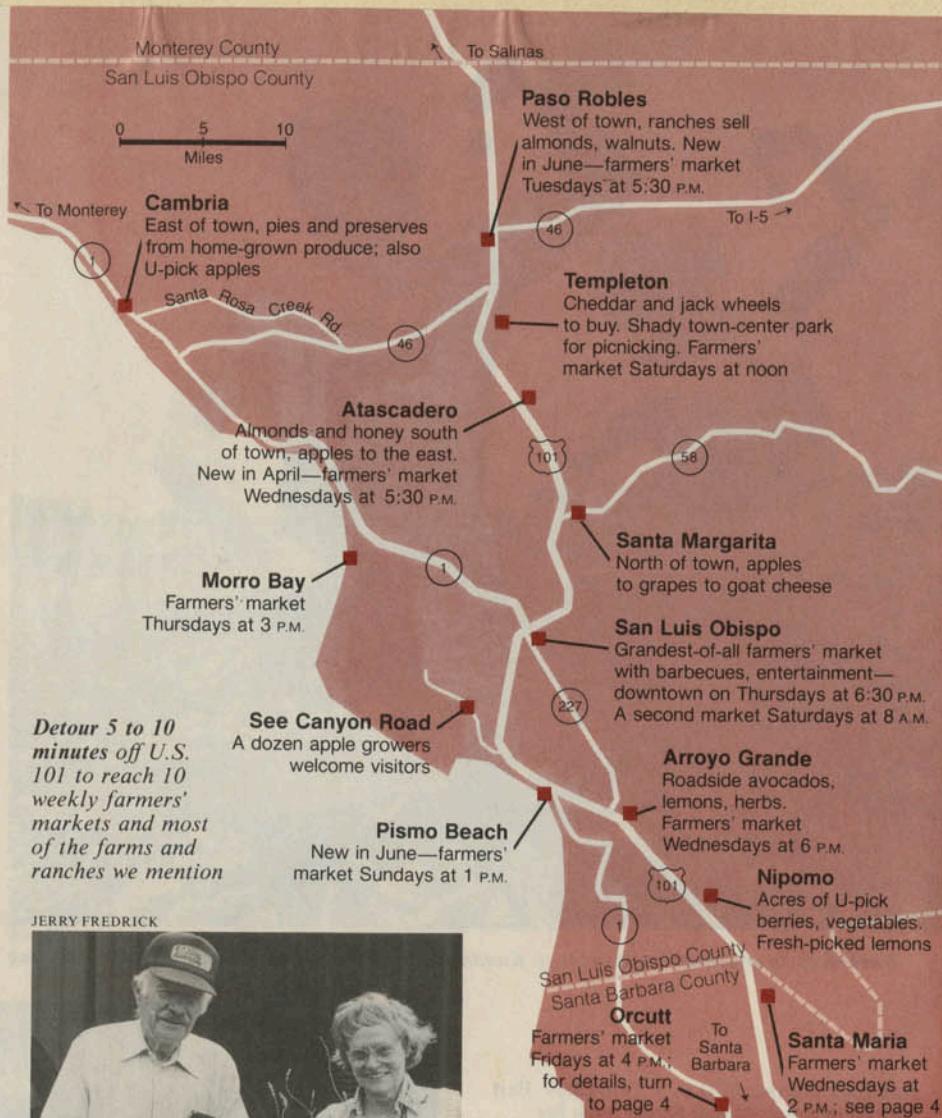
**Grapes to goat cheese near Santa Margarita.** Take State 58 (El Camino Real) east. A mile past town, turn left on Linden Avenue, then left on Poplar Avenue, curving around to Walnut Avenue. Turn left; the road ends under a grape arbor at *Blue Sky Ranch*, about 2 miles from the freeway. Open 7 to 7 daily from September through November, it sells Thompson and red seedless grapes, several varieties of apple including Arkansas Black, and homemade goat cheese; 438-5801.

**Honey and almonds south of Atascadero.** Exit westward at Santa Rosa Road; go left on Atascadero Avenue to *Stoltzey's Bee Farm* at 10080, about ¾ mile from the freeway. Open 9 to 2 weekdays, it sells 12-ounce to 12-pound containers of honey (alfalfa this month); 466-0473.

Exit south on State 41 (Morro Road) and go 1 mile to *Drew Ranch Almond Shop* at 8790—a grower's outlet since 1932; 461-3603. Stop by 10 to 5 daily (to 6 Sundays). Nuts are offered raw, roasted, spiced, candied, fudged; also try the fresh lemonade sweetened with honey.

Across the intersection, Atascadero Lake Park is a shady place to picnic.

**Apples to the east.** Exit east on Curbaril Avenue, shortly crossing the railroad tracks



Packed up for Pismo market, Dick and Jane Wiley also sell lemons, avocados, and herbs at ranch north of Arroyo Grande

and Salinas River; turn left on Templeton Road and go ¼ mile to *The Elegant Apple* at 4400; 466-1033. This ranch is expected to open for business September 25, dawn to dusk daily. Criterion, Ryan Red, and Red and Yellow Delicious. There are places to picnic.

**Cheese at Templeton.** Take Vineyard Drive west, then go left on Rossi Road (frontage road) ¼ mile to *LaSalle Dairy*; 434-3055. Open noon to 6 daily, it sells red pepper, garlic, no-salt, and regular jack cheese, and cheddar. Ask directions to the pleasant city park in town at Fifth and Crocker streets.

**A detour toward Cambria.** Take State Highway 46 west 3.3 miles to *Formentini Ranch*, on the right at Oakdale Road; open daylight hours daily, it sells eggs, elephant garlic, poultry (including pheasant), and some vegetables; 239-0259.

Continue west on 46 about 7 miles, then turn right onto Cypress Mountain Road; drive 4.4 miles, then bear left onto Santa Rosa Creek Road. After 11.3 scenic miles along a tree-shaded creek, look for *Linn's Fruit Bin*, open 9 to 6 daily; 927-8134. A shop by the fields sells daily baked pies (ollalieberry, apple, raspberry-rhubarb, peach-blueberry, walnut-spice, pecan); frozen chicken and beef pies; home-grown and dried statice, yarrow, and strawflowers; preserves; fresh-picked raspberries, tomatoes, and apples. There's a picnic patio.

Across the road, .2 mile west, *McCall Farm* is open 8 to 6 daily except Sundays; 927-3140. Surrounding an idyllic 1870s farmhouse are orchards of U-pick Golden Delicious apples; Hass avocados are also for sale now. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, come to pick persimmons.

**Nuts near Paso Robles.** Exit west on 24th Street; past Spring Street, it's 1.8 miles west on Nacimiento Lake Drive to *Jardine Organic Ranch*, open 7 to 7 daily, which sells ranch-grown almonds, walnuts, dried fruits; 238-2365.

**Horseshoe Ranch.** 2½ miles west from Nacimiento Lake Drive on Adalaida Road, also sells August-harvested almonds, walnuts; call first, 238-2578. □

## Despite Low Claims, Issuer Reluctant to Renew Liability Coverage

# Farmers Markets Are Facing Insurance Crisis

From Associated Press

Like local government agencies, farmers markets in California suddenly find themselves facing a liability-insurance crisis.

The California Direct Marketing Assn. had a group policy with Fireman's Fund to cover 70 of its members' markets scattered throughout the state.

But that policy lapsed Dec. 31, and Fireman's Fund was "hesitant to renew even though we had an excellent safety record," association President Marc Leinwand said.

The association began looking for other insurers but found companies reluctant to insure a type of business that is not operated by the same people in the same place all the time. Farmers markets often operate once or twice a week in a parking lot with a variety of farmers offering wares at various times, depending on what crops are ripe. "We tried every company, but

we're such a different kind of thing no one has something like this on their books," Leinwand of Healdsburg, Calif., said in a telephone interview.

Finally, the association went back to Fireman's Fund "and tried to convince them that the markets are safe," Leinwand said. The group pointed out that there were only \$500 in claims in two years.

That tactic may work as association and insurance company officials plan to meet late this week to work out a new policy.

The policy will cost more than double the \$250 to \$300 each farmers market paid for liability insurance last year, but "that's not going to throw any markets out of business," Leinwand said. "Some have found other policies and they've averaged \$1,600 to \$2,000 per year."

Markets covered by the umbrella policy at Paso Robles and Merced went out of business temporarily for lack of insurance.

Leinwand said some markets were able to keep operating by obtaining temporary riders on policies held by cities or counties if they were located on city- or county-owned property.

Cities and counties themselves have faced huge increases in liability-policy costs from insurance companies worried about the state's "deep-pocket" rule.

That rule allows a person who wins a damage suit in which a government agency is partly at

fault to collect the entire amount of damages from that agency if others found more liable cannot pay their shares. A petition is circulating now to get a proposition on the state ballot to end the rule.

Farmers markets don't have "deep pockets" and their problem springs from the unique nature of their enterprise coupled with changes in insurance earnings, Leinwand said.

"What I've been told by insurance companies is that when interest rates were high in the 1970s, they locked up high investments," he said. "Now interest rates are not so high, so (insurance) rates are up."

## Farmers markets without insurance

By Phil Dirkx  
Telegram-Tribune

The farmers markets in Atascadero, Paso Robles and Templeton have suspended operations because they have not been able to get liability insurance.

The farmers markets in Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay also are without liability insurance but have decided to remain open.

These markets had been covered by a group insurance policy through the California Direct Marketing Association, an organization of farmers markets.

The insurance coordinator for this association is Charlotte Turner of Arroyo Grande, whose husband, John, is the manager for the Arroyo Grande, Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo markets.

She said about 70 of the 90 farmers markets in the state had been insured under the association's liability policy from Fireman's Fund. That policy expired Jan. 1 and Fireman's Fund refused to renew it, Turner said.

She said the farmers markets have had very few claims but the insurance company said "it did not want to deal with open air markets that are not in clearly defined areas."

She believes the farmers markets are victims of the insurance industry's recent reluctance to provide liability insurance, which has affected child care centers, local governments and other agencies.

Turner said she has been working on the insurance problem since last July and hopes to have a new policy "before too long."

She said she has been told the cost for \$1 million in liability coverage probably will double or triple.

The board of directors of the North County farmers markets decided to suspend operations until the insurance coverage is restored. Its directors did not want to bear the liability responsibility themselves and they are required by their operating permits to have liability coverage.

For example, Paso Robles requires the market there to have at least \$500,000 worth of coverage, said market spokeswoman Pearl Munak of Paso Robles.

But Turner said the board of directors for the Arroyo Grande, Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo markets decided to keep them open. She said the Santa Maria markets are also remaining open.

# agriculture



FARMERS MARKET — Oak Park Plaza merchants hope their just-started Farmers Market Wednesday nights proves as popular as its

Thursday night counterpart in San Luis Obispo. This picture was taken at the San Luis Obispo market recently.

## Farmers Market Has New AG Site

By Elaine Wohl  
Staff Writer

ARROYO GRANDE — Farmers Market now has a new location an addition to Saturday afternoon's gathering behind City Hall.

The new site is at Oak Park Plaza, a move that apparently pleases the Oak Park Merchants Association.

"We're really enthusiastic about it," said Glynnis Mullenery, association treasurer.

The first Oak Park Farmers Market on April 2 drew 24 growers, said John Turner, manager of the San Luis Obispo County Farmers Market Association, Inc.

"There wasn't an overwhelming mob out there," he said, "but for this time of year I was very pleased." A similar-sized crowd collected again the next Wednesday evening.

The newest Farmers Market will begin every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. The market behind City Hall is conducted Saturday afternoons.

Oak Park merchants felt a Farmers Market was an excellent way to draw residents to the commercial shopping center, said Mary McCaughey, vice president of the merchants association and co-owner of The Fast Roll.

Turner said he was first approached by the merchants' group in Fall 1985 but felt it unwise to open during winter because of insufficient produce.

The Oak Park Farmers Market brings the number of South County markets to five. The group opened a market in Pismo Beach in June 1985, but it folded in November for lack of grower interest, said Turner.

# ARROYO GRANDE FARMERS MARKET

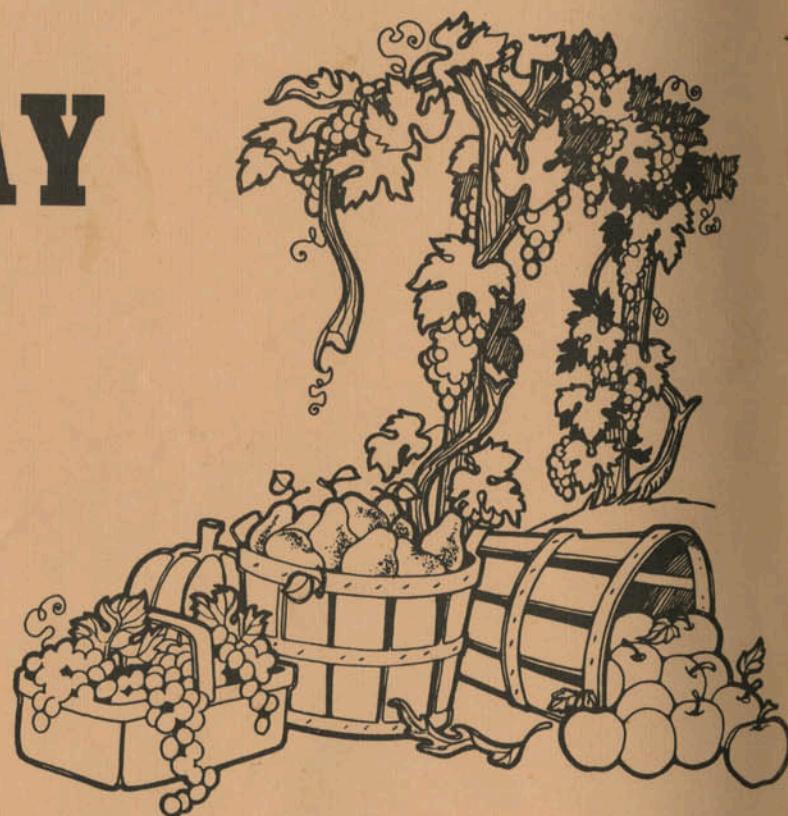
IS CHANGING TO A NEW TIME AND PLACE

**NOW: SATURDAY**

**2 TO 4 P.M.**



**YOU'LL FIND US  
BEHIND  
CITY HALL**



# San Luis Obispo



Both street party and shopping spree,  
San Luis Obispo's weekly farmers'  
market takes over Higuera Street

JERRY FREDRICK

**Every Thursday**, San Luis Obispo throws a party. Higuera Street is blocked off near the mission, and dozens of local farmers truck in crates of apples, zucchini, almonds, and eggs. By 6 P.M., downtown spills over with people buying, selling, eating, browsing, or just swapping gossip.

As the bounty pours into the market, the *county* of San Luis Obispo pours into the *city* of San Luis Obispo. Stop to sample a slice of an Arkansas Dark, and you wind up talking rare apples with a See Canyon farmer. Buy a plate of ribs from a curb-side barbecue, and you taste the long tradition of Paso Robles' ranches. Pause to examine a fresh albacore, and your mind's ear hears the clangor of fishing boats on Morro Bay. The year-round street party celebrates the many rural pleasures of the region.

# *San Luis Obispo County*



## **farmers market**

### SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FARMERS MARKET

OAK PARK PLAZA	Hywy. 101 & Oak Park Blvd.	WEDNESDAY 5:30 to 8 PM
MORRO BAY	2560 N. Main - Young's Giant Food Parking Lot	THURSDAY 3 to 5 PM
SLO CITY	Higuera St. downtown 800-900 blocks	THURSDAY 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM
SLO COUNTY	Williams Bros. Parking Lot. So. Broad St. near Airport in San Luis Obispo	SATURDAY 8 to 11 PM
ARROYO GRANDE	City Hall Parking Lot Mason and Short	SATURDAY 1:00 to 4 PM

Information call:	John Turner, Manager	805-489-0889
	Jim Park	805-544-2667
	Peter Jankay	805-544-1283

FARMER'S BARbeque Sept. 14, 1986







## HARVEST FESTIVAL CELEBRATION AT ARROYO GRANDE SALOON

Friday & Saturday:

Live Music Nightly

Saturday:

- **FARMERS MARKET** - beginning at 10am
- **ART SHOW**
- **LIVE REMOTE** with KPGA Radio  
(Free Give-A-Ways)
- **LIVE MUSIC** - Sam Eddy's 50's, 60's Band
- **F. McLINTOCKS FAMOUS BBQ**

"Celebrate Harvest Festival at  
F. McLintocks Saloon"

133 Bridge St., Arroyo Grande... 481-1700

Celebrate  
Harvest  
Festival  
On Bridge  
Street!

Sat., Sept. 27

- Live Music  
SAM EDDY'S  
50's-60's Band
- Famous  
McLintocks  
BBQ
- Huge  
FARMERS  
MARKET

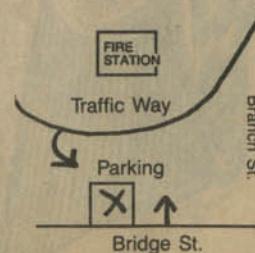
(beginning at  
10:00 am)



Historic Bridge St. House

Home of

**LOW COST IMPORTS**



"Bring The Family, Spend The Day!"  
"In the Village"

Much, Much More!  
132 Bridge Street  
Arroyo Grande  
(In Historic 1895 Bridge St. House)  
Across From McLintocks

489-7102

## OSO FLACO HEAD OF PRODUCTION

# Lettuce Crop Good,

## Says Local Inspector

By Elaine Wohl  
Staff Writer

NIPOMO — Kneeling in an Oso Flaco area lettuce field, Ed Ingram peeled away the loose leaves from an iceberg lettuce head, then cracked it open with a pipe joint.

The county agricultural inspector looked for insect damage, rotted leaves and other signs to determine whether the lettuce head met state quality standards.

Ingram looked hard, but found nothing to indicate a bad product. In fact, since lettuce inspection began at its usual time in April, county inspectors have yet to come across bad lettuce.

"It's the first time I've seen that," said Ingram, who has more than 12 years of inspection experience. "It's

been a good year."

A good year for a good business. The county's iceberg lettuce harvest was valued at \$2.748 million in 1985, making it the highest valued crop in the county.

The county itself ranks among the top 10 in the state for lettuce production. Most of San Luis Obispo lettuce is grown in the Oso Flaco area.

The lettuce inspection program, carried out by the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, was initiated by lettuce growers in the early 1960s.

The growers, who subsidize the program at a penny a carton, wanted to improve the local industry's image for quality control, said Richard Greek, county agricultural commissioner.

In 1985, county inspectors statistically sampled more than 5.5 million cartons of iceberg lettuce, according to the county's annual crop report. One carton typically holds 24 heads of lettuce.

Part of the inspection job falls to Ingram, who is kept busy from April to the end of December, starting as early as 6:30 a.m.

There are a host of reasons why iceberg lettuce might not meet state minimum standards. A grower has the option of destroying substandard lettuce or repacking produce to eliminate substandard heads, said Robert Hopkins, county deputy agricultural commissioner.

Problems that affect lettuce production include rot, insect damage and tipburn. But over the last

decade, said Ingram, the amount of lettuce rejected has steadily decreased.

He attributed the slowdown to improved lettuce strains and farming techniques. Both genetic and farming advances have dramatically improved lettuce production in the last 20 years, said Chuck Atlee, a Cal Poly crop science professor who specializes in vegetable production and international agricultural development.

Today's lettuce strains are more resistant to mildew and tipburn, he said. Tipburn, or dead lettuce tissue, is caused by too-rapid growth that leads to calcium deficiency.

"Those are the two things we have been able to control through new resistant varieties," said Atlee.



LETTUCE INSPECTION — Ed Ingram, county agricultural inspector, looks over a head of iceberg lettuce in an Oso Flaco field.

Photo by Elaine Wohl

All clients in the program are adults, ranging in age from 18 to 60. They come from the Mental Health Association's socialization centers in San Luis Obispo, Atascadero and Arroyo Grande to work on the farm. All are paid minimum wage.

"Most of these people have never had a 'real' job," said Braasch. "Just filling out a time card is more of a challenge than most of them could face without help. Working here, accomplishing something, does a lot for their self-esteem. A lot have gone on successfully to other jobs.

"We've seen such changes," said Braasch, squinting across the fields into the morning sun. "This went from a weed field to all this." She pointed to neat rows of red cabbage, cucumbers, bell peppers, musk melons, tomatoes, squash and pumpkins.

"I remember when we first brought a couple of clients out here, right after PG&E donated use of the land. Looking at all the weeds, I think some of them thought we were nuts ..."

Braasch's dog, Sasha, was suddenly on her feet, bounding toward a husky bearded man walking up from the greenhouse. It was Bob Faretta, vocational director of Growing Grounds Farm.

"Bob! Bob!" called a young man who squatted among snaking vines laden with plum cucumbers. "Shall I let this one grow a little more?" he asked, holding up an 8-inch specimen.

Faretta smiled broadly, laugh lines deepening at the corners of his eyes. "No, that's fine," he said. "That's a good one. Go ahead and cut it."

Faretta patted Sasha as he spoke. "I kind of grew up on a farm, spending summers in Fresno on my uncle's place. I was self-employed as a landscape gardener and contractor for 10 years in Santa Barbara.

"I got divorced, moved back to Fresno, but after a few years, I decided I wanted to move back to the coast. I applied for this job about a year ago, and here I am.

"It's a good vocational program. A lot of these people probably couldn't hold regular jobs. There's a wide range of people here. You could probably best describe them as all chronically mentally disabled, but most are what we call 'higher functioning.'

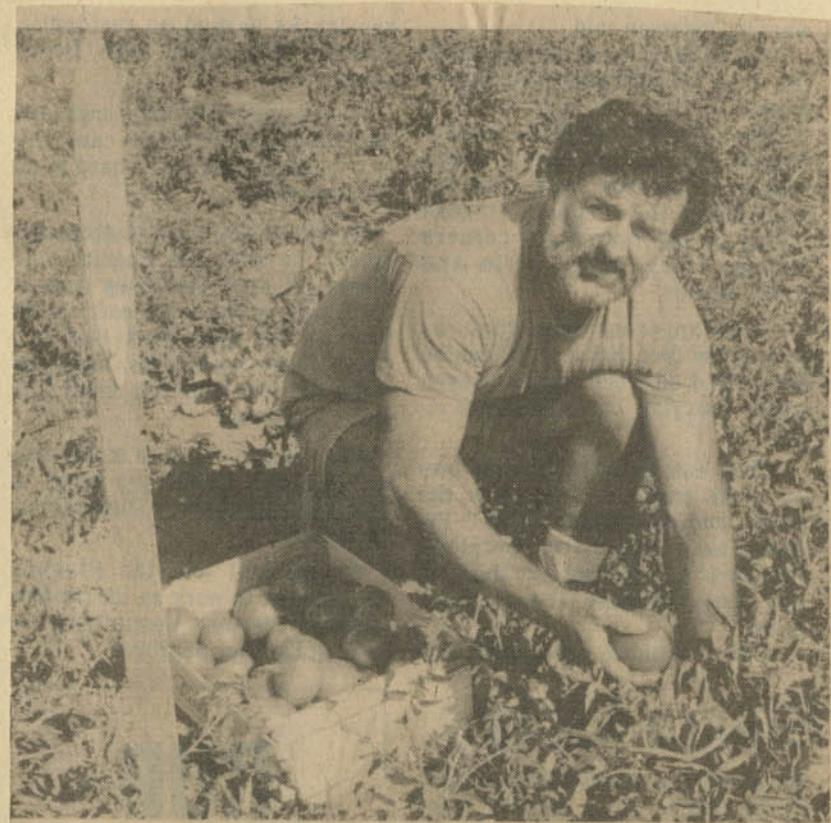
"Many of them, at first meeting, you'd have trouble recognizing they even had a problem. Some will be fine for a while, then they 'decompensate' — they can't get up in the morning, they get confused.

"It's taken me awhile to understand that I can't apply *my* rationalizations to their behavior."

Said Braasch, "The whole idea of the project was to give their lives some structure. They do better in groups. They respond to positive peer pressure, like 'Hey, I was at the garden yesterday. Where were you?'"

Faretta agreed: "The camaraderie is definitely important. They tend sometimes to isolate themselves. There's not a lot of pressure here.

"What's really great now, we're starting to get some community support and recognition. People look for our stand at the Farmers Markets. People stop by here and bring us boxes and flats, and donate seeds and plants."



Bob Faretta, the farm's vocational director, works a field.

# Farmers market benefits almost everyone

To the editor:

I am writing in response to a letter published recently in your newspaper regarding Thursday Night Activities. I would like to clear up some of the issues raised by the author.

The writer complained that Thursday nights have become nothing more than a time to socialize, and that shoppers are staying away. In a poll conducted as a Senior Project earlier this summer, 42 percent of those surveyed on Thursday nights said they make purchases in retail stores while downtown Thursday nights. The Business Improvement Association is bringing 6,000 to 9,000 people downtown on Thursday nights, and 42 percent of that number adds up to a lot of shoppers.

All activities on Thursday nights are licensed by the BIA. In order to obtain a license, one must be either a member of the BIA, a non-profit organization, or be invited as a promotion, as are the Farmer's Market and musical groups such as the County Band and the Central Coast Chorus. Interlopers are removed by the police.

The writer also alleged that there is a trash and mess problem left by Thursday Night Activities. The BIA has worked diligently to assure that the streets are cleaner Friday morning than they are any other morning of the week. Each barbecue is, in fact, assigned a block to clean up at the end of the night.

## Letters

Following that, a professional janitorial service comes in and cleans the sidewalks and storefronts. The BIA pays for this service with revenue collected from participants in the event, not from general BIA dues.

The Thursday Night Activities downtown have brought thousands of potential customers downtown every Thursday night, winter and summer. It has brought us national exposure on the Today Show and in Sunset Magazine. In a poll conducted by the BIA of its members, 92 percent strongly supported the Thursday Night Activities. I think it is important that these issues are cleared up. I, for one, remember what happened when the streets were blocked off. There was no one downtown, shopping or socializing. We are infinitely better off now than with what we had before — nothing!

John C. Bushnell  
Chairman, Thursday Night Committee  
Business Improvement Association

Fri., Oct. 3, 1986—Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder, Arroyo Grande, Calif.

# Harvest Festival



GOOD TO EAT — Fresh produce from the Farmers Market is displayed at the festival.

San Luis Obispo County (Calif.) Telegram-Tribune/ Friday, October 3, 1986 / 3/A



Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

Democratic candidate for governor, Tom Bradley, shakes the hand of Peter Jankay of San Luis Obispo at Farmers Market.

## County Digest

### *Market closes for holidays*

Downtown merchants and the Farmers Market will be taking three evenings off in November and December.

There will be no Farmer's Market or Thursday night activities on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's day — all Thursdays, the San Luis Obispo Business Improvement Association has announced.

The BIA sponsors the Thursday night events.

Farmer's Market will be held as usual Nov. 20 and Dec. 4, 11, and 18.

The annual Christmas Parade, sponsored by the BIA, will be held Friday, Dec. 5, beginning at 7 p.m. Parade entries will be accepted until Nov. 22, and applications are available at the Chamber of Commerce or the BIA office at 1108 Garden St., Suite 205. Call Dodie Williams at 541-0286 for additional information.

## Selling of Farm Goods Requires State License

SACRAMENTO — California Food and Agriculture Director Clare Berryhill warns that anyone purchasing, handling or soliciting California farm products for processing or resale must be licensed by the department's Market Enforcement Branch or face a \$10,000 fine effective Jan. 1.

The Food and Agricultural Code has been amended, making it a misdemeanor for any person assuming, acting or attempting to act as a processor, licensee or agent without a license. Such action will be punishable by a fine of not less than \$10,000, by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than one year, or by both the fine and imprisonment.

All persons purchasing, handling or soliciting California farm products for processing or resale are required to be licensed, including out-of-state operators.

The department's Market Enforcement Branch, originally established in 1928, provides protection for both producers and licensees of California farm products from financial loss due to dishonest or unfair business practices of middlemen and processors and provides for orderly marketing of agricultural commodities grown or produced in the state. Its activities are supported solely by license fee revenues.

Additional information or assistance is available from any Market Enforcement Branch office:

Fresno: 2550 Mariposa St., Rm. 3084, 93721 (209) 445-5315

Rosemead: 8855 E. Valley Blvd., Rm. 222, 91770 (213) 620-4004

Sacramento: 444 N. Third St., Suite 406, 94814 (916) 322-2111

San Francisco: 2095 Jerrold Ave., Rm. 219, 94124 (415) 557-2107.

Headquarters: 1220 N St., Rm. A-454, 95814 (916) 445-2271.

Fri., Dec. 12, 1986—Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder, Arroyo Grande, Calif.

## Holiday Spirit Is Alive, Well

**GROVER CITY** — Christmas may still be two weeks away, but the spirit is prevalent throughout South County, and especially in the many shopping plazas that are welcoming visitors with Christmas goodies, music and special promotions.

A bit of rain and cool weather failed to dampen spirits last weekend, as hundreds turned out for the annual Christmas parade in Grover City and then joined merchants and local artisans at an arts and crafts faire and other activities conducted throughout the afternoon.

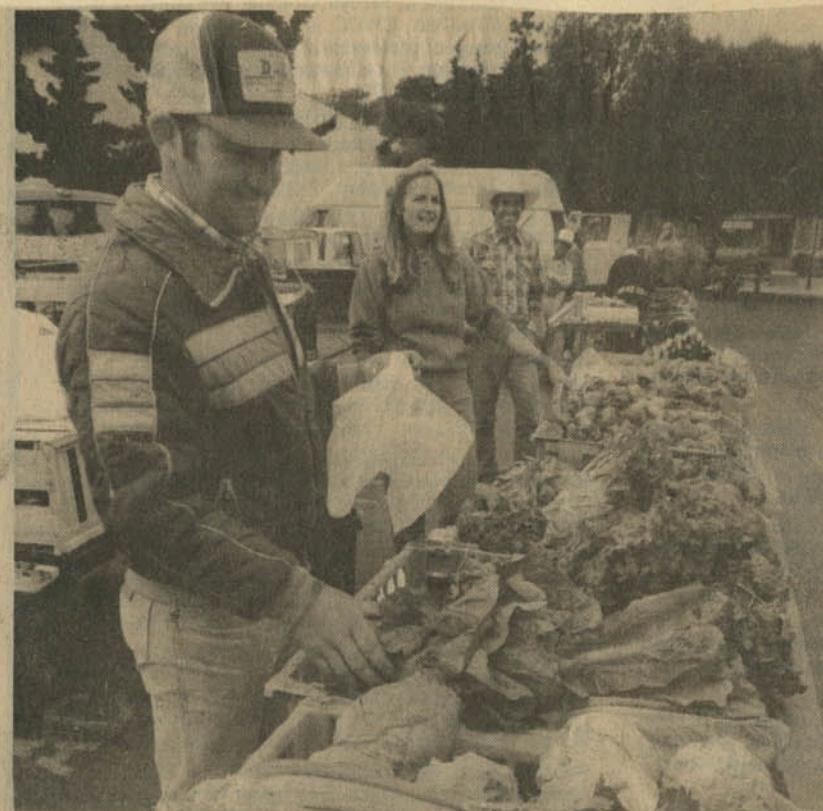
Music from the Lone Star band greeted plaza visitors who could also greet jolly old St. Nick and indulge in Christmas goodies.

Visitors to Arroyo Grande's Village were also treated to food, music and artistic creations.

Farmers set up tables and offered visitors true "farm fresh produce," while vendors offered popular snacks, including popcorn and soft pretzels.

Children of all ages were enthralled by magic acts and had the chance to visit and even have breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Holiday fun continues at both locations throughout the season.



**FARM FRESH** — Fred Ormonde, foreground, and his wife, Esther, brought their produce to the Farmer's Market in Arroyo Grande on Saturday.

# Farmers markets lure shoppers, kibitzers

By Linnea Waltz  
Telegram-Tribune

Popularity of the farmers markets in San Luis Obispo County continues to grow as the weekly produce sales become part of community life.

Some visitors look forward to the market as part of their vacation.

Brooks Bennett and daughter, Heather, 5, of Costa Mesa, spending Christmas and New Year's Day in San Luis Obispo, were enjoying the comradery and holiday spirit at the Broad Street Farmers Market Saturday morning.

"I always shop Farmers Market when I come up," she said. "I like the contact with the growers and their fresh produce."

Neighbors, friends and nodding acquaintances near Bennett chatted with each other and visited with the vendors.

Many growers and customers are regulars at the market, starting when the market first opened July 29, 1978.

They greeted each other in the chilly early Saturday air as though it had been months ago instead of only a week.

Grower Manuel Haber from Morro Bay had a single stalk of Brussels sprouts left when a grandmotherly type inquired for the vegetable.

He gave her the stalk without charge.

Haber has 10 acres by Little Morro Creek near Morro Bay where he grows sugar peas, zucchini, tomatoes, cole crops and "a little of everything," he said.

He was one of the growers at the farmers market when it opened nine years ago.

"There are volume buyers at this Saturday morning market," said Fred Ormonde of Arroyo Grande.

He credits the volume of produce shoppers buy with the ease of adjacent parking on the Williams Bros. lot.

"People can keep going back to their cars to unload without taking a long hike like they have to do at the Thursday night market downtown," he said, "and there are no big crowds to worry about."

Ormonde has a 100-acre farm near Arroyo Grande where he grows hay, grain and vegetables.

"I sold produce at the first market in 1978," he said. "Then I quit for awhile. But when Turner took over, I came back."

Farmers markets in the county began with the organization of the Saturday morning sale from 8 to about 11 a.m. by the Economic Opportunity Commission.

William A. Castellanos, EOC community service director in 1978, organized the market with 12 vendors backing their vehicles into spaces allotted them.

The market doubled in size its first month, and within two years, was attracting more than 50 growers during the harvest season, Turner said.

Turner and his wife, Charlotte, were named managers of the farmers market in November 1980 by the farmers themselves.

The EOC relinquished operation of the project to the farmers within six months after its founding.

Each vendor is allotted a space 15 feet wide by 20 feet long for his car or truck, from which he sells his produce. There are no stands or other equipment used, Turner said.

County health regulations require produce to be sold at least 2½ feet off the ground.

The market requires all vendors to grow all of their produce themselves, or be a regular, full-time employee at the farm, ranch or orchard where the produce they sell is grown.

Vendors also must receive certification from the county Agricultural Commissioner before they can participate in the market. No culls or products contaminated by pesticides can be sold.

Each seller pays 3 percent of gross sales to Farmers Market, a non-profit organization.

In July 1980, an Arroyo Grande farmers market was opened, and one in Morro Bay July 1981.

The Arroyo Grande market has been split into two markets, one held Saturdays at noon behind City Hall, the other in the Oak Park Plaza Wednesday nights. Other markets have been opened throughout the county.

Turner pays the market managers, insurance, and license and health and agriculture permits.

He said the Thursday night market on Higuera Street will be paying part of the Business Improvement Association's Thursday night activities. It also pays part of the after-market cleanup expense of the downtown area.

Growers average about 40 each at the Morro Bay and downtown Higuera markets, Turner said.

Oak Park averages about 25 growers, and behind City Hall, about 20. Saturday morning at San Luis Obispo the average is about 35. Turner said it increases to the mid-50s during growing season.

The Turners on Jan. 1 relinquished management duties on all but three markets to "get caught up

on home work," he said.

His market duties include getting the site ready for the market before the growers come in.

"When they start coming in, I place them," he said. "Some have their spots, others are assigned their spots when they arrive."

He checks their licenses and permits and the county Agriculture Commissioner sends out an inspector monthly to each market to inspect the produce.

"We collect the fees from the growers at the end of the market, and we do the bookkeeping, the banking, pay the taxes, permits and licenses. The typical routine office work of all businesses," Turner said.

He said the only time "we 'call' a market is for Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Years, all of which this year fell on Thursdays for the first time in 10 years."

Asked if he liked farmers market work, he said, "Oh, yes. It's the only reason I do it. I've also gone to various organizations to speak about our markets," he said.

Turner taught 5th and 6th grades in Orcutt and Morro Bay schools 20 years and his wife was a laboratory technician at San Luis Medical Clinic before they both retired.



David Middlecamp/Telegram-Tribune

Fred Ormonde of Arroyo Grande sells Brussels sprouts to Joy Haszard of Avila Beach at the Saturday farmers' market.



H.T. Ped of Oceano unloads vegetables from truck as Ruby Flathers sets up sales table.



# Village of Arroyo Grande Strawberry Festival

**Saturday & Sunday, May 23 & 24 10:00 a.m. - 6 p.m.**



## OLD-FASHIONED STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL VILLAGE OF ARROYO GRANDE

**SAT. & SUN., MAY 23 & 24, 1987**

- ◆ Live entertainment all day long throughout the village
- ◆ Arts and Crafts show.
- ◆ Wandering minstrels, mimes, jugglers and other entertainers
- ◆ Battle of the Bands
- ◆ Strawberry shortcake, chocolate dipped strawberries, non-alcoholic strawberry daiquiris, oak pit barbecue, Greek food, Chinese food, Mexican food, chili, popcorn, brownies, strawberry pies and more!
- ◆ Games for the kids
- ◆ Farmer's market
- Live remote radio broadcast by KPGA & KVEC with prize giveaways.
- ◆ Strawberry Blonde Contest
- And...delicious, local strawberries — sold directly by the growers — by the berry, by the basket, by the flat, by the truckload!

### SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1987

**10:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.**

- ◆ Bicycle Time Trials (8:00 a.m.)
- ◆ A Fish Fry (3-6 p.m.)
- ◆ An Obstacle Course (10:00 a.m.)
- ◆ 1st Annual Strawberry Festival Arroyo Grande Swim Club — Swim Meet. Continuing Sunday.

### SUNDAY, MAY 24, 1987

**10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.**

- ◆ 10K Strawberry Stampede (8:00 a.m.)
- ◆ Strawberry Pancake Breakfast (8 a.m. - Noon)
- ◆ 1st Annual Strawberry Festival Arroyo Grande Swim Club — Swim Meet

**FREE** Parking at the High School with  
**FREE** Shuttle Bus to Festival area

*Bring The Family For An  
Old-Fashioned, Fun-Filled  
Weekend Of Celebration!*

**Village of  
Arroyo Grande**



Wed., May 27, 1987—Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder, Arroyo Grande, Calif.



REASON FOR CELEBRATION — Strawberries from various Arroyo Grande Valley farms, including Kaminaka Farms shown here, were available during the weekend's Strawberry Festival, featured on Page 6C.

Photo by Stacey Lynn Resener

*Central Coast Dining*

## Take your pick of produce at 14 farmer's markets

**by Robert Judd**

Associate Editor

Fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables are easily available at affordable prices at any of the 14 weekly farmers' markets on the Central Coast, from Paso Robles to Santa Barbara. Chances are, there's one near you.

Eaten raw from your fingers or tossed in a salad, sliced on your morning cereal or baked in a cobbler, steamed, boiled or canned, the produce from our gardens and farms gets no better than in this harvest season. And Central Valley growers expect bumper fruit crops this year so prices will probably favor the consumer of such favorites as peaches, nectarines, plums and grapes.

By now, of course, almost everyone on the Central Coast—if not California and the West, thanks to *Sunset Magazine's* September 1986 issue—knows about San Luis Obispo's popular Thursday evening market on Higuera Street.

For many, it's a street fair and party with hot and cold finger-food for creek-side picnicking, live music, jugglers and magicians, and an incredible array of fresh produce year-round from local growers. For others, it's a great night out with the kids in tow, and if the weather's fine, as it often is, a time to be grateful for living in this corner of the world. For quite a few, it's hectic and noisy, maybe a little too rowdy sometimes, but exciting and even profitable.

But San Luis Obispo's Thursday night fiesta is only one place where growers gather customers at outdoor markets. There are 13 others during the rest of the week. (See box on this page for location and times.)

The variety of produce exceeds that of most supermarkets, for specialty growers often don't produce enough to produce to ship to wholesale grocers or commodity brokers at a profit. For the grower of miniature gourmet vegetables, such as Barbara McCulley of Nipomo, the farmers' markets on the Central Coast are a boon. Her baby turnips and carrots, and the icicle radishes, attract considerable attention and command premium prices, but you can't beat the quality or the price.

Like other growers who participate in direct marketing to the public, there's a savings in the long run while both grower and consumer enjoy advantages unmatched in any other market. The only cheaper place you might find such fresh delectables as artichokes or avocados, oranges, berries or lettuce would be a roadside stand near the field or orchard. To obtain the variety you can find at any of the Central



Photo by Shirley Thompson

**For that farm-fresh taste, it's farmers market produce.**

Coast farmers' markets, however, you'd have to visit a dozen or more stands in three or four counties.

Direct marketing is a movement among small growers not only here on the Central Coast but throughout the state and nation.

John Turner, long-time manager of the San Luis Obispo markets, reports California leads the country in direct marketing programs, with 100 growers' associations and markets from the border to Oregon. Southern California has almost three dozen, with 22 weekly markets in Los Angeles County alone.

Each grower who sells at a farmers' market must meet certain state requirements as well as regulations imposed by the associations running the markets where he sells. The county agricultural commissioner must certify the grower and his crops. There are no sizing, packaging or labelling standards which apply to other kinds of farm marketing.

Quantities are limited to weight or number; by the piece, bunch or pound. Most markets charge each participating grower a small percentage of his daily gross receipts, and his overhead is low if he sells off a table with only a scale, a canopy and some used bags. It's a cash and carry situation: no checks or credit cards.

Most growers who sell at Central Coast outdoor markets are small operators who make a modest living with hard work and attention to detail. Some, like Ron Perry and his wife Marilyn of Tulare, have geared their whole 120-acre farm to direct selling at eight weekly markets from Torrance to Morro Bay. With his father as partner, the Perrys enlist the help of their teen-age daughters and son to truck their fresh and dried fruit, nuts and grapes several hundred miles a week to customers on the coast and in the city.

"It's a good life," says Ron, "but we get tired of bein' on the road so much."

Similarly, Linda Peacock and her three daughters bring two truckloads a week from their 50-acre farm and orchard in the eastern San Joaquin Valley to the nine markets they attend every week. Customers at Lompoc and Paso Robles jump at the chance to buy nectarines and peaches fresh from the Peacock's trees. And the prices are about the same as you'd pay in the store for products stored for days in refrigeration.

Peter Jankay of San Luis Obispo gardens about 1½ acres near the airport. He and his wife sell flowers

*continued on next page*

***continued from previous page***

and berries in the summer, with some produce thrown in if his crops turn out, but they help to manage the markets in Morro Bay and downtown. A singularly brown and fit man with touches of gray in his brown hair, Jankay talks eagerly about the "good spirits" that prevail on a sunny day at the markets he manages.

"It's wonderful to be out here in the sunshine, seeing people have a good time. "But," he muses "it can get hectic sometimes and downright grim if it's raining. We're here anyway rain or shine."

Glenn Johnson of Arroyo Grande sells snowpeas at Santa Maria and Lompoc as well as San Luis Obispo. Later he'll be bringing tomatoes and corn. Look for a big bear of a man with lots of reddish hair peeking out of the top of his shirt and from under his baseball cap. He'll be joking, "Don't just look buy, buy, BUY!" when shoppers pause to check his offering.

Look also for a trim little lady with a big straw hat who's selling delicious boysenberries from out of the trunk of her Cadillac sedan at Arroyo Grande's Oak Park shopping center. That'll be Evelyn Fernamberg. She has lived in the county every one of her 72 years, most of it on the ranch she and her husband share with her brother.

Her gnarled fingers testify to decades of serious gardening in her 1½ acre plot. She's been marketing directly to the public for most of her life, and for the past 10 years at farmers' markets on the Central Coast. Mrs. Fernamberg is on the board of the marketing association in San Luis Obispo County.

Once you find the market you like near you, you'll find a reason and a way to go regularly. You can't miss all the fun, and the bargains are nothing to sneeze at. ■

## South County Citizens Capture Honors

PASO ROBLES — South County citizens captured 33 firsts, 10 seconds and 12 thirds in the agriculture-horticulture categories at the Mid-State Fair.

The winners, their place and the categories are listed below.

Evelyn Fernamburg, Arroyo Grande, first, corn-bulk yellow dent; first sweepstakes grain/dry bean; first, corn-bulk any other variety; first, corn-five ears yellow dent; first, corn-five ears popcorn; first, dry beans cranberry beans; first, dry beans horse beans; first, dry beans Mexican red beans; first, dry beans white beans, small; first, field and garden seed corn, yellow dent; first, field and garden seed corn, popcorn; third, leafy and stem herbs dill; first, fruit and pod vegetables beans, snap, Blue Lake; first sweepstakes — vegetables; first, leafy and stem vegetables rhubarb, cherry; first,

root, bulb and tuber vegetables beets, garden; second, root, bulb and tuber vegetables garlic, red; third, root, bulb and tuber vegetables onions, red skin; first, root, bulb and tuber vegetables potatoes, red skin; second, root, bulb and tuber vegetables potatoes, Russet; third, vine crops gourds, ornamental, small; first, vine crops pumpkins, Boston sugar pie; third, vine crops pumpkins, Connecticut field; second, vine crops pumpkins, Jack O'Lantern; second, vine crops pumpkins, other varieties; first, vine crops squash, spaghetti; third, vine crops squash, turban; second, vine crops squash, zucchini, green market; first, miscellaneous largest red garden beet; first, miscellaneous largest lemon; first, apples crab-apples; third, apples Delicious, Golden; third, apples Winesap; first sweepstakes - fruit/berries; first, apples winter banana; third, apricots

Royal; first, figs Mission, black; second, peaches Babcock; first, peaches Elberta July; second, persimmons hachiya; first plums Damson; third, plums Satsuma; first prunes sugar; first lemons Eureka; second oranges Navel; first, oranges Valencia; first, small fruits and berries blackberries; first, small fruits and berries boysenberries; first, small fruits and berries Himalaya berries; first, small fruits and berries raspberries, red; first, small fruits and berries strawberries, any variety; first, walnuts Placentia.

Pamela Pipes, Oceano, third, fruit and pod vegetables beans, Snap, Blue Lake.

Patrick Williams, Arroyo Grande, second, vine crops, squash, zucchini, yellow, market; first, fruit and pod vegetables beans, snap, wax; third, fruit and pod vegetables tomato, improved Beefsteak/Pond; second, fruit and pod vegetables Tomotillo; third, vine crops miscellaneous, edible vine crop.

# San Luis Obispo County



## Farmers' Market

### San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Markets

Oak Park Plaza* Hwy. 101 & Oak Park Blvd.	Wednesday 5-8 PM
Morro Bay** 2560 N. Main Young's Giant Food Parking Lot	Thursday 3-5 PM
SLO City** Higuera Street downtown	Thursday 6:30-9 PM
SLO County* William Bros. Parking Lot So. Broad, near San Luis Airport	Saturday 8-11 AM
Arroyo Grande* City Hall Parking Lot Mason & Short	Saturday 12-4 PM

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#### For Information Call:

- \* John Turner, Manager 805-489-0889
- Jim Park, Association President 805-544-2667
- \*\* Peter Jankay, Manager 805-544-1283

